

ONAL

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Gerhard Schröder, 'Germany's Blair', named opposition candidate to challenge chancellor after surprise triumph in Lower Saxony

State ballot brings Kohl defeat a big step nearer

Ian Traynor in Hanover

GERMANY'S most popular opposition figure, Gerhard Schröder, took a giant step towards unseating Chancellor Helmut Kohl last night when he was named as the Social Democrats' candidate for the chancellorship after scoring a stunning victory in elections in the northern state of Lower Saxony.

"The Kohl era is over. This signal has been made clear," announced a beaming Mr Schröder. "The desire for a change in Bonn is running deep."

Seeking a third term as prime minister of Lower Saxony, Mr Schröder surprised pundits by increasing his share of the vote by 3 per cent, according to early projections.

His victory reversed a three-year trend of diminishing support for the Social Democrats (SPD) and was the party's best ever result in the state. It was seen as a personal blow for Mr Kohl, who had devoted considerable time to campaigning in the state on behalf of his Christian Democratic party (CDU).

Franz Müntefering, the SPD party manager in Bonn, immediately announced that Mr Schröder had clinched the chancellorship nomination, defeating Oskar Lafontaine, the SPD leader, in the contest to lead the charge against Mr Kohl and the CDU in general elections on September 27.

"I think Helmut Kohl suffered a personal loss in Lower

Saxony," Mr Schröder said. "He turned this into a sort of primary for the federal election, not us. We stood up to the challenge."

Asked about the September election, Mr Schröder said: "We have a good chance. Helmut Kohl said he wanted to teach us a lesson. That didn't seem to work out as he planned." But, he said, Mr Kohl remained a dangerous opponent. "I have never underestimated Helmut Kohl. We haven't beaten him yet."

Early projections gave the SPD almost 48 per cent of the vote, surpassing the most optimistic predictions. The CDU had around 36.4 per cent, the same level as in 1994.

"I'm not only disappointed. I'm very sad," said Christian Wulff, the CDU candidate for Lower Saxony prime minister. The result means that seven months before the general elections, the opposition campaign has received a tremendous fillip.

Mr Kohl invested heavily in the Lower Saxony campaign, making 11 appearances at rallies in a failed attempt to make inroads into Mr Schröder's support and boost Mr Lafontaine's chances of winning the nomination. Mr Kohl thrashed Mr Lafontaine in 1990 and was confident of being able to beat him again.

The chancellor fears Mr Schröder, aged 53, who the opinion polls suggest is the only man who can defeat him. The SPD executive is to meet today to discuss Mr Schröder's nomination and to capitalise on the head of



Gerhard Schröder and his wife Doris arrive at a polling station in Hanover yesterday to cast their votes

PHOTOGRAPH: KAY METZELD

steam building up behind the pragmatic and centrist candidate, the nearest figure in German politics to Tony Blair or Bill Clinton.

"I am delighted," Mr Lafontaine said, toasting Mr Schröder with schnapps.

"Such a score is a great success. I will nominate Gerhard Schröder as our chancellor candidate tomorrow."

A survey last week found an 8 per cent national swing from the Christian to the Social Democrats since the

beginning of this year, with a 16 per cent swing in eastern Germany. That trend could be reinforced by Mr Schröder's triumph.

Mr Kohl's failure in Lower Saxony could provoke a whispering campaign against him

in his party since the opinion polls also signal a preference for his deputy, Wolfgang Schäuble, and a growing consensus that at age 67 and after 16 years in power it is time for Mr Kohl to bow out.

Despite being in opposition

for almost 16 years, the SPD has fared wretchedly in all recent state and regional elections. Last night's performance proved to the many sceptics and enemies in his party that Mr Schröder is the Social Democrats' sole vote-winner.

Power-hungry maverick with contempt for party peers

GERHARD Schröder, aged 53, was born into poverty in 1944, the same year his father was killed during the war in Romania. He has been married four times and is a self-made, power-hungry maverick, writes Ian Traynor.

For the past year, he has regularly topped the popularity ratings.

Yet just over a year ago, he attracted the tabloids' attentions after leaving his popular and glamorous third wife, Hilma, for Doris Köpf, a Bavarian journalist 20 years his junior.

Mr Schröder keeps his own counsel and is unloved by the Social Democratic Party apparatus, which conceded last night that he is the sole figure capable of putting the SPD in power after 16 years in the wilderness.

Mr Schröder shows his contempt for the party by bragging that in five months he has not once dropped by the party's election campaign headquarters in Bonn. He once described his peers and rivals in the party as a bunch of "mediocrities".

Mr Schröder and his four brothers and sisters were reared in Lower Saxony by his mother, a cleaner. He left school to earn a living before completing his education at night school and then studying law.

He practised as a lawyer until he became Lower Saxony's prime minister in 1990. He joined the Social Democrats in 1993 and in 1978 became leader of the Jusos, the party's youth wing, enjoying what turned out to be a false reputation as a radical firebrand.

After entering the Bonn parliament in 1980, he pounded on the gates of the federal chancellery, shouting: "I want in there."

Aitken gets job as arms salesman

David Pallister

BRITAIN'S largest defence contractor, GEC-Marconi, confirmed yesterday that it has hired Jonathan Aitken, the disgraced former Tory minister, to help it sell weapons to the Middle East.

The company refused to expand on the terms of Mr Aitken's contract or to elaborate on which weapon systems and markets it was targeting. But it was widely assumed among defence experts that the former MP, aged 55, had been taken on for his close contacts with the Saudi royal family, which has been a source of his wealth since the late 1970s.

He has had a long-standing relationship with GEC and its former managing director, Lord Westminster, helping to secure civil engineering contracts with the royal family.

His pay is likely to be based on the success he brings GEC in the competitive Middle East defence market. Commissions of 15 per cent and

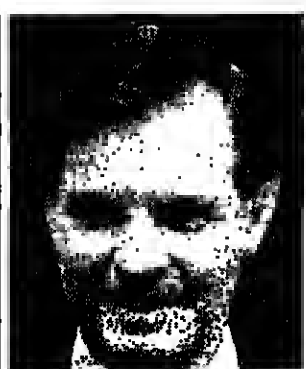
more on deals worth millions of pounds are not uncommon.

Mr Aitken's job will provide him with his first confirmed income since his libel case against the Guardian and Granada's *World in Action* collapsed spectacularly in June, after evidence was produced that he and his family and friends had lied to the court.

He was then faced with a legal bill of around £2 million which has yet to be settled. Scotland Yard is shortly to present a report to the Director of Public Prosecutions on whether he should be prosecuted for perjury.

Detectives have travelled to Paris and Switzerland to collect evidence about how his bill at the Paris Ritz hotel in September 1993 — the centre of the libel action — was actually paid by Prince Mohammed bin Fahd, the son of the Saudi king and Mr Aitken's benefactor for more than 20 years.

Although the extent of Mr Aitken's fortune remains a mystery, it was assumed that he would have to sell his grand Westminster house. However, he and his children still live there.



Jonathan Aitken: disgraced ex-MP 'hired for Saudi ties'

Any sales from GEC to the kingdom are likely to be brought under the umbrella of the Al Yamamah defence deal for the supply of military aircraft, ships and training. First negotiated by Baroness Thatcher in 1985, this is estimated to be worth £20 billion, or £2 billion a year, to British Aerospace, which acts as the prime contractor.

Successive government ministers have insisted that this is a government-to-government contract with no agents and no commissions but evidence has seeped out in recent years that Saudi princes and their associates have enriched themselves enormously in the trade.

Mr Aitken is credited with helping to secure a £5 billion tranche of Al Yamamah in 1993 when as minister of defence procurement he persuaded King Fahd to buy 48 more Tornado fighter-bomber planes.

His surprise appointment to that job in John Major's 1992 administration, after 18 years on the back benches, was widely believed to be because of his Saudi contacts.

Dirty arms deals, page 8

De Niro dropped by Vatican from reading Pope's poetry on CD

Dan Gialster Arts Correspondent

HE PLAYED a priest in *True Confessions* and the devil in *Angel Heart*, but these blasphemous associations did not stop the Vatican approaching Robert De Niro to ask him to contribute to a CD recording of the poems of Pope John Paul II.

Now the invitation has been withdrawn. The actor's

sin? Being in the wrong place at the wrong time, De Niro's interrogation by a French judge about his possible connection with a high-class international call-girl ring has led the Vatican to drop him from the planned CD.

Father Giuseppe Moscati, who is co-ordinating the project for Edizioni Musicali Terzo Millennio, said: "In view of the news, De Niro's participation no longer seems such a good idea. These are

poems written by the Pope, after all, and it appears that the image we had of De Niro when we made the proposal is far from the truth."

Other actors approached include Gregory Peck and Dustin Hoffman. Gérard Depardieu has been asked to record a French version.

The American CD follows a recording of the Pope's poems released in Italy last year, which sold 30,000 copies. A second Italian recording will

be released at Easter, with a third planned, possibly using the voice of Sophia Loren.

The Pope's excursion into the CD market comes after a stage appearance with Bob Dylan last year.

The snub to De Niro, who has forcefully denied any involvement with the prostitution ring, comes after he said he would hand back his Legion d'honneur medal, awarded to him at last year's Cannes film festival.

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Fidelio transcends its irritations

Review

Andrew Clements

Fidelio, Lucio Silla English Touring Opera/Opera for Europe

TAKING opera to those parts that its grander counterparts can't reach, English Touring Opera is on the road until the end of May with a revival of *Cinderella* and a new staging of *Fidelio*, Robert Chevara's first as director of productions.

The tour started in Cambridge and ranges from Preston and Ulverston in the north

to Exeter and Truro in the south.

As both London's main houses have demonstrated all too clearly, Beethoven's only opera is hard to get right, and it is bold of ETO to take *Fidelio* on, especially with limited forces — an orchestra pared to the minimum, a chorus of 11 and just seven prisoners for the famous first-act set piece.

But Chevara's production — in distressed grey sets and Goya-esque images by Es Devlin — puts the bone structure of the drama in place, even if that is all too often covered in unnecessary details and obvious point-making.

The directorial cliché of Leonore disguising herself as

Fidelio on stage during the overture is trotted out once again. Florestan's aria puts flesh on the vision of his wife by having her glide past when all attention should be focused on him, and the final, transcendent chorus is cluttered with portraits of political prisoners, as if the audience can't be trusted to work out the message for itself.

But somehow the emotional force of the piece survives these irritations, due in large part to Andrew Greenwood's conducting, which brings a grand sweep to each act, and to Geraint Dodd's forthright ringing Florestan and Susan Stacey's penetrating, focused Leonore. There's good support, too, from Denise Mulholland (Marzelline) and Jeffrey

Lloyd-Roberts (Jacquino). Certainly the honest seriousness of this *Fidelio* is far better than the wilful inconsequence of Lucio Silla, which came to the Shaftesbury Theatre, London, last week. This is the first offering from Opera for Europe, the touring showcase of the Manchester-based European Opera Centre.

As the vocal mastery of the cruelly demanding roles in Mozart's early opera *seria* demonstrated, the organisation has achieved its aim of bringing together promising young singers for intensive training. But the gratuitous nonsense served up in Brigitte Fassbaender's production revealed nothing except a lack of faith in the music.

For those able to read the runes of the Murdoch empire the key words were "negative aspects": they confirmed that the great media mogul's fingerprints were all over the decision to dump Chris Patten's memoirs - and that he had made his views known to his minions in a typically robust manner. Andrew Neil writes on Rupert the Fear

New clothing lore for female solicitors



Daniela Nardini, who played the solicitor Anna in TV's hit series *This Life*, and boosted the legal profession's image

Innocent

- Look professional but not fashionable
- Always wear make-up — but not too much
- Wear co-ordinated colours and styles
- Wear elegant shoes
- Use quality accessories
- Be well-groomed
- Wear matching skirt suits. Waistcoats are acceptable
- Wear neutral, non-tweed or wool fabrics
- Trouser suits are acceptable

Suspicious

- Open necks or bare legs
- Perfume
- Distractions such as dangly jewellery or flowing hair
- Anything revealing
- Cardigans
- Double pierced ears
- Dark hair roots
- Mobile phones — seen or heard

If you want to get ahead then get a suit, women lawyers told

Guidelines emphasise neatness over fashion, reports CLARE LONGRIGG

WHEN Marcia Clark was prosecuting O.J. Simpson in front of the world's TV cameras, her appearance underwent a dramatic transformation. Her hair, formerly shaggy and unkempt, was moulded into a well-behaved perm. She started wearing more make-up and high-heeled shoes. Her suits became tailored and stylish.

Naturally, the media attacked her for this transformation, as for everything else she did — particularly after she lost. But female British lawyers are now being urged to consider their appearance as a key to their success.

Anna and Milly, solicitors in TV's hit series *This Life*, may have had turbulent private lives, but they boosted the legal profession's image. Women rushing to the bar in the wake of the series are to

be offered a little sartorial advice to ease their way.

Guidelines for female solicitors have been issued, emphasising a neat, businesslike look over fashion considerations. Loud colourful jewellery and plunging necklines are considered unsuitable; a mini-skirt could damage a woman lawyer's credibility. Flat shoes and cardigans are out, elegant heeled shoes are in. Big hair must go.

Organisers of a solicitors' exhibition which opens today at the Birmingham NEC claim women are held back from promotion within legal firms because of the way they look.

The number of women entering the profession has tripled in recent years, but this is not reflected in the number becoming partners.

In response to these concerns, the solicitors' exhibition engaged image consultants



Hair: Keep it short. No tell-tale roots.

Earrings: Large pearls always go down well with judges. No multiple piercings — and that goes for noses/eyebrows

to advise women solicitors on dressing respectfully. They came up with 'The Rules', which include a ban on bare legs and see-through fabrics, and suggest a trouser suit with waistcoat.

'We believe that professional image has a major influence on professional acceptance', said exhibition organiser Nigel Stevens.

A Law Society spokesman said women sometimes make style gaffes in court, while men need look no further than the pinstripe suit.

But Sue Stapely, a former solicitor now working in corporate communications, disagreed. 'I advise women solicitors to do something a little more creative and imaginative. We tend to fall into the dark suit and light shirt mode. But a lot of clients expect you to wear something showing a bit more imagination.'

'Communication and presentation are taken increasingly seriously in the legal profession. The Law Society's annual conference programme includes workshops on dress and presentation which are popular with men as well as women. When Sue Stapely ran the first workshops on style for solicitors,

they were massively oversubscribed.

'Solicitors have to think about how to come across in a businesslike and approachable way', said the Law Society spokesman. 'Solicitors have to dress in a way that makes their clients feel confident. Appearing in a stained saggy-necked T-shirt is not going to impress anyone.'

Finding the right outfit can be expensive, as many judges insist lawyers wear black and white in court. The next campaign for women lawyers is to get clothing as a tax-deductible expense. Then we might see some style.

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programme will be a book 'won't get the job done'.

In a clear attempt to peace with the profession, said: 'The issue considered' it is a strong possibility.

he said, adopting a range of the law, loyalty, 'and even hunting it would be to kill foxes.'

Mr Foster, whose bill will be debated again on Friday, said last night: 'I could not endorse a compromise. If a compromise was on the cards, it would have happened 20 years ago. Licensing hunting would be totally endorsing it. I could not accept that position.'

'Attempts to defuse the

Kray parole hearing near

Former gangster 'represents minimum risk'

Reg Kray, the last of the Kray twins, is set to have a parole hearing in the next few days. The hearing will be held at the Home Office, and will be attended by the Home Secretary, Jack Straw. Reg Kray is currently serving a life sentence for the murder of his brother, Ronnie Kray, in 1965.

The Home Office has received a report from the Parole Board, which has recommended that Reg Kray should be released on parole. The report states that Reg Kray 'represents a minimum risk' to the public.

Reg Kray was arrested in 1967, and was sentenced to life imprisonment for the murder of his brother. He was released on parole in 1995, but was re-arrested in 1996 and sentenced to life imprisonment again.

The Parole Board's recommendation is based on a report from a probation officer, who has stated that Reg Kray is 'well behaved' and 'represents a minimum risk' to the public.

The Home Office is expected to make a decision on Reg Kray's parole in the next few days.



Reg Kray, the last of the Kray twins, is set to have a parole hearing in the next few days.

note with extreme concern comments regarding my client's imminent parole board hearing... attributed to an unnamed spokesman for the Prison Service.

A spokesman had been quoted as saying that life sentence prisoners are only ever released from open prisons. Kray is still in a category C prison, Weyland in Norfolk — one stage higher.

Yesterday Mr Linn said it was not the case that life prisoners were released only from open prisons.

'I know of a number of life sentence prisoners released from category C and even category B jails,' he said.

'There is no reason why Reg could not be released.'

Yesterday a Prison Service spokesman said it did not comment on individual cases.

While the possibility of parole for the moors murderer, Myra Hindley, still faces strong hostility with the public and most of the media, there would appear to be little opposition to Kray's release.

One of the detectives who helped to lead him, Leonard 'Nipper' Read, now retired, said: 'He has done the length of time that the court felt was right. I see no objection to him being released.'

Diana's bodyguard regaining memory

Kamal Ahmed, Media Correspondent

THE only survivor of the crash in which Diana, Princess of Wales, was killed has said he can now remember some details of the accident.

Rees-Jones, the bodyguard sitting next to the princess in the car which crashed into a tree, said he was 'helpful' in the investigation.

Rees-Jones, who was injured in the crash, has been recovering in hospital. He has been able to recall further details of the events which led up to the crash.

'I have given three interviews to the press,' Rees-Jones said. 'I remember very little of the final journey on August 31. In my interviews with the psychiatrist I have remembered a little more. I am therefore having a further meeting with the judge to tell him what I remember.'

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Buckingham Palace and the Spencer family have made clear that the glut of articles raising questions about the princess's death has been hurtful.

Speaking before the Mirror interview had been published, Michael Gibbs, the princess's former private secretary, said: 'I think the expectation must be that it is a helpful contribution, which is interesting to the public, and which is helpful to the investigation.'

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Mr Morgan said Mr Rees-Jones wanted to stress that he had not made any financial gain from Diana's death.

'I am happy to confirm that,' he said.

In previous meetings with the French authorities, Mr Rees-Jones, who was badly injured, has only been able to remember the vaguest details of the accident, and doctors said his memory was unlikely to return.

But after a series of interviews with a psychiatrist, he has been able to recall further elements of the events which led up to the crash.

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March panics ministers

hunting row came at the end of a week of U-turns and concessions to the countryside lobby, despite some ministers and many backbenchers regarding it as a Tory trick for bloodsports, and accusations of panic.

In just seven days, the Government has backtracked on greenfield development, softened its position on the right to roam, extended consultation on banning unlicensed milk, found new money for beef farmers, eased the financial pressure on village schools, promised to delay village school closures and held out the prospect of action on rural traffic.

It was confirmed yesterday that Cabinet-level negotiations are under way over transforming the Ministry of Agriculture into a Rural Affairs Department. Downing

Street strongly denied it was a response to the march.

As the protesters set off through central London, Lord Donoughue, an agriculture parliamentary secretary, said: 'We must have a voice in Cabinet which would be the central focus for all matters affecting the countryside.'

Insiders say a whole new department is some years away, but the ministry is hoping to increase its environmental responsibilities as the purpose of farm subsidies shifts from income support to green issues.

Tomorrow a cross-party group of MPs, including Labour's Kate Hoey and Peter Luff, the Conservative chairman of the agriculture select committee, will launch a campaign for a system of regulation for hunting.

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Study finds Brown plan for tax credits can leave poor families worse off

David Brindle and Anne Perkins

GORDON Brown's plans to transform the prospects of poorer families by guaranteeing incomes to them out of the poverty trap come under attack today in a study which says they could discourage people from working.

In a further blow to the Government's plans to pres-

ent welfare reform in a positive light, the international survey by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation says Working Families Tax Credits have at best a 'handicap' in Canada they were abandoned after they were found to make people worse off.

The Chancellor believes the system of topping up low incomes through the tax system rather than benefits will end the so-called 'poverty trap', which leaves people living on low-paid work with less cash in their pockets.

The Working Families Tax Credit, a new tax credit, is the centrepiece of the first stage of welfare reform.

Today's study analyses tax credit schemes in Australia, the US and Canada. In the US, the research found evidence of disincentives to work and

a high incidence of fraud. The research concludes that there remains a strong case for sticking with family credit — the top-up for low-income households — that would be replaced by a tax credit.

Donald Hirsch, Joseph Rowntree Foundation adviser, said: 'The unforeseen problems with tax credits in other countries, including work disincentives and fraud,

make it vital that the proposed British system is carefully designed and its operation closely monitored.'

In a separate report, Child Poverty Action Group today calls for lone parents to have a real choice between going out to work and staying at home to care for their children.

Tax credit has its limit, page 11

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1990-2000

Rural lobby raises its angry voice

Landowning interests have forced politicians to listen to them. **Luke Harding** reports



Shanks' pony... Hunters got off their mounts and on their high horses, pounding London's streets to tell townies to tread carefully. PHOTOGRAPH: MARTIN GOODMAN

THE affluent rural lobby re-emerged as a major force in British politics yesterday after about 250,000 people joined the march in central London to protest against government policies on the countryside.

In the largest demonstration since the CND rallies of the early 80s, marchers descended on the capital to vent their spleen over ministerial handling of rural issues including foxhunting, farming, and the right to roam. It now seems unlikely that Tony Blair will attempt to tackle the pro-hunting lobby head-on during this Parliament.

Organisers claimed the demonstration had woken politicians to the strength of feeling over countryside issues. The small number of anti-hunt protesters who picketed the march claimed most people — including a majority in the countryside — still favoured a ban on foxhunting.

The Government seemed deeply divided, with Michael Meacher, Minister for the Environment, taking part on behalf of the Government while Jack Cunningham, the Minister of Agriculture, stayed away. It faces further discomfiture next week when Labour backbenchers will try to keep alive Mike Doonan's doomed private members bill to ban foxhunting.

Scotland Yard said the demonstration passed off peacefully with only seven arrests. The Countryside Alliance claimed there were 284,500 marchers on the route. The police estimated that a quarter of a million had turned up. An alliance spokesman, Paul Latham, said: "It shows that the rural lobby is alive and a force in politics. In the build-up to the march, there have been a number of decisions taken that the countryside would welcome. I'm sure we will see more such decisions."

Most of the shadow cabinet, led by William Hague, was there. Paddy Ashdown, and the former Liberal leader, David Steel, represented the Liberal Democrats.

Mr Ashdown renewed his call for a Royal Commission to re-examine foxhunting, and accused the Conservatives of using the rally to try to rebuild their "shattered

The Journey: 'A few were given tickets because their pay is so low'

Peter Hetherington

HEADING south by train, the unemployed and the Old Etonian huntsman ignored the class divide. Bob Richardson, from the old mining village of Backworth on Tyneside, sends his dog down the fox hole to flush out what he calls "vermin". Then he pops them off with a stun gun. "There's no more humane way," he says proudly. "I like all field sports —

shooting, the lot. Labour is out to get at us, but we've got Blair and those idiots on the run. They're making all kinds of concessions."

Charles Renwick, former army officer and doyen of Northumberland's Morpeth Hunt — "Out as often as I can" — likes to lead from the front. "What's all the fuss?" he asks. Hounds may tear a fox to bits after its neck has been broken, but really it's just the equivalent of filleting a fish — "the kind of thing Michael Foster does after a day's

fishing" referring to the pro-angling Labour MP whose anti-hunting bill gets its second reading this week. "The problem is, all these critics in the town don't understand us."

The marchers crammed onto the train from the shows of Newcastle soon after dawn, slithering into town from the Pennines, Cheviots and beyond. Toff-like Charles Renwick, keepers in their deerstalkers, whippet men sporting baseball caps, the great mass of the countryside in flat caps, and a few jobless men like Bob Richardson with no headgear.

We had been assured by the organisers, the Countryside Alliance, that they were all gathering for an epic 600-mile round trip to save the shires from the urban masses and an uncaring Government bent on undermining every aspect of rural life. But, in truth, most were there to preserve

the right to hunt with hounds and pursue their own version of a "freedom to roam".

Robert McCarthy, a full-time worker with the Duke of Northumberland's prestigious Percy Hunt, was resplendent in his tweeds and cap, and he was angry. "I wouldn't go into town and tell them how to run their business, trample on their gardens — so why are they doing it to us?"

Although the duke had paid for Mr McCarthy's £27 ticket, Mr McCarthy insisted most people were paying their way.

Vicki Knox had organised the train, a huntswoman and a tenant of the duke. She was scornful of those who accused the gentry of bankrolling the event and exerting pressure on tenants and estate workers. "Rubbish," she said. "People have bought their own tickets in the main, but a few were given them

because their wages are so low."

She was staggered by the size of the flat-capped army. "I'm a bit of a left-winger, never voted Conservative, and I never thought I'd see this happen in this country — calm, non-militant people taking to the streets because they'd had enough."

But enough of what? All manner of grievances came to the surface during a four-hour journey, from the conventions "freedom to roam" proposals — now put on ice — to failure to support agriculture while banning beef on the bone.

"We're fed up with these town people coming into our fields and telling us how to run things," said a farmer's wife. "We're trying to protect our way of life... we're on the headline. Nobody cares for us. If a miner or a steelworker loses his job, he's given help. Who gives us help?"

Actually the Government does, with substantial subsidies. "Don't give us that stuff, we work bloody hard!"

Some, like Rodney Britton, a farrier, had never been to London — "Don't like cities." His father John, founder of the family firm, says they'll lose half their business if hunting is banned. "People in the towns have this image of the fox as a nice furry animal, but they're vermin, everyone in the country knows that. Last year I lost 15 hens."

A few on the train are equivocal. When one protester gently rebukes his partner for suggesting that not everyone on the march is in favour of hunting, she replies: "Well, let's face it, quite a few farmers are opposed because they don't like the hunt rampaging over their land and they ban them — but keep quiet about that today."

The MP: 'I can think of lots of better ways of spending a Sunday'

Anne Perkins
Political Correspondent

"THE Labour Party has traditionally neglected rural areas because we bought the Tory propaganda that said this was their territory."

Peter Bradley is one of the new breed of Labour MPs who ousted more than 100 Tories from the shires. He won The Wrekin, a constituency in the heart of rural England.

"I think the Government is only just beginning to realise how strong we are in the countryside."

"It's true, our roots are urban and industrial. But now we have critical mass in rural communities, and it's time to deliver on the one-nation promise."

Mr Bradley has in the past week found himself a person of some importance: he chairs Labour's backbench rural affairs group of 75 MPs. Last May the party won 160 rural seats, more than the Conservatives, and is now the party of the shires — numerically, at least.

Last Friday, Mr Bradley found himself called upon to hold a press conference to back the party's line on the countryside. "The rural agenda," he says confidently, "is largely the same as in the town. Health, schools, employment. The single biggest issue is transport."

"The agenda's the same, but there are different solutions."

To the rural sceptic, his message is undermined by his past. He is a public relations man, born in Birmingham, 10 years a Westminster city councillor, a man whose formative rural experience was the green-grass campus of Sussex University. But he's trying to learn.



Peter Bradley, MP for The Wrekin. PHOTOGRAPH: MARTIN ARGLES

"I went hunting the other day," he said. "In a Range Rover with two delightful country gentlemen. They took me round the lanes."

"We barely saw a red coat, let alone a fox. I could do that any Saturday or Sunday I had time. You can enjoy the countryside without chasing foxes."

Not that he was joining yesterday's march.

"I can think of lots of better ways of spending a Sunday. But you have to take people seriously if they think they have a grievance."

In the Bradley analysis, the real rural malaise is neglect. "On the knocker, the well-known fact is that the countryside is neglected. The Countryside Alliance, those I meet are delighted to see the Labour Party in their village."

Most of them haven't seen an MP at all.

"And what about hunting? The Countryside Alliance has used it to hijack that rural agenda. It's deeply divisive — the way it suggests that townies are townies and country people are country people, and never the twain shall meet. If they've got it one central theme and they've tackled on lots of others. Frankly it's the old feudal divide and rule mentality."

Tony Blair does not seem to agree. In the eyes of some of his backbenchers, he appears to have taken a feudal attitude himself, ignoring his party's sensitivities to make concessions to the landed gentry.

One Tory MP said last week: "It's great, we're getting a retreat a day at the moment." He added: "Of course, John Major showed us that if people think you're retreating under pressure you get no political credit."

Mr Bradley denies that the countryside has somehow got Mr Blair on the run. "The trouble is if you do nothing, you're inflexible; and if you listen and respond, somehow you're weak and vacillating."

He is among 55 Labour MPs backing calls for a new Department of Rural Affairs, an idea with support at the Ministry of Agriculture and also backed by some Tories.

In his constituency, he has a plan to get the train company, the local authority and the Rural Development Commission to work together to provide bus services linking villages, schools and railway stations.

But he thinks the "countryside" needs to come to terms with the real world. "They need to understand that they can't expect to be a special case."

"After all, they didn't stand up for the miners, did they?"

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party. "One of the things that makes me angry is their hypocrisy on the countryside, as if all the problems which are deep-seated and complex and have been going on for two decades." Michael Yardley of the Sportsman's Association, accused the Conservatives of hijacking the event. "A lot of people have jumped on this bandwagon comparatively recently."

More than 2,000 coaches and 29 special trains made their way to London for the protest. The march began at 10.20 and tens of thousands of people snaked their way slowly up from the north bank of the Thames through Trafalgar Square to the finish point at Hyde Park.

It took five hours for all of the marchers to set off. Most were dressed in green, Barbour jackets or tweeds, and many carried pro-hunting banners.

Julia Long, an animal rights activist who turned up to picket the event, complained that the march had been "taken over" by the pro-hunting lobby. "I don't know

Clashes between hunt saboteurs and demonstrators failed to materialise

If there are any genuinely hard-up people there at all, they all look pretty prosperous to me.

"I feel it is very arrogant of these people to come up from the country. They want us to subsidise their bad farming methods. They want to carry on hunting, which the majority of people don't want. And they don't want us on their land. They want everything their own way."

The Countryside Alliance, which is pro-hunting, rejected the charge that blood sports enthusiasts had hijacked the march. "The anti-hunting Bill was the primary reason the march was organised. It makes no sense to say a march we have organised ourselves has been hijacked by pro-hunters."

The showjumper, Richard Meade, led the procession

with an Olympic torch. He was followed by a group of huntmen wearing scarlet jackets and by a brass band and bagpipers. Mr Meade said there was "tremendous opposition" to Mike Foster's private members' bill and he had invited Michael Meacher to go hunting with him after meeting him in the seats at the Savoy, where marchers began the day with breakfast.

"I'm delighted Michael Meacher has decided to take part. I hope he learns something about the countryside."

Asked about the right of ramblers to roam over private land, he replied: "What one doesn't want is the countryside to be over-run. It would lose its essence."

Anne Johnson, one of a handful of freelance anti-hunt demonstrators at Trafalgar Square, said she was disgusted by the march. "We want to bring this country into the next century where the killing of wild animals will not be carried out by sadists like these."

At the front of the march were representatives of rural professions who consider themselves threatened by anti-hunting legislation. Brian Webber, a farrier from Cornwall who attended last year's Countryside Rally in Hyde Park, said a ban on hunting would hurt his local Chinese take-away, where he went once a week because his income would fall. "I'm here to protect my future interests. I'm here to try and get the Government to listen to us instead of dictating to us. I would just like to leave some countryside behind for my grandchildren." The BSE crisis was "bloody crippling us".

David Davies, a professional huntman and former plumber who had travelled from mid-Wales, said that he had more respect for the fox than any conservationist. "I love the fox. My message to the people of London is why should they interfere with our way of life?"

Mr Davies complained that he had slept badly the night before the march in London hotel. "I'm used to the peace of the countryside. There were cars flying past my window."



This land is our land... Demonstrators fill a London street in the biggest protest march since the days of CND in the 1980s

PHOTOGRAPH BY SAMANTHA PEARCE

The issues: 'grand coalition' conceals fight against hunt ban

formally remained neutral on the bill and refused to give it extra time, despite the 411-151 vote in favour during its second reading. But there is still uncertainty over Tony Blair's longer-term intentions.

Clever tactics by the bill's supporters may ensure that it stays on the agenda by going to the Lords. The likelihood is, though, that wrecking tactics by Conservative MPs will ensure it fails.

The Countryside Alliance openly describes itself as a

pro-hunting body, and is a subsidiary of the British Field Sports Society.

In a symbolic move, red-coated huntmen were invited to walk at the front of the march. Faced with such a robust display of shire will, it is unlikely that Tony Blair will risk a head-on confrontation with the pro-hunting lobby later in this parliament. If this is the case, then the marchers have won the argument.

The alliance is also dissatisfied with the Government's handling of several other rural issues:

- The right to roam. The alliance is worried about the threat of statutory action by the Government to give people the right to roam over private land. Landowners have been given three months to come up with a voluntary code.
- Farmers' claim walkers will force them to introduce expensive insurance and may damage crops. Ramblers groups dismiss this as 'absolute rubbish'.
- Threats to the livestock industry from the effects of the BSE crisis, the strong pound and cheap imports. The National Farmers Union says thousands of livestock farmers still face enormous problems caused by the current beef ban.
- The green belt. The alliance welcomed last week's announcement by deputy Prime Minister John Prescott that 60 per cent of future development should be built on brownfield sites, but it wants the figure to be higher and claims countryside areas are still threatened by large housing developments.
- Rural infrastructure. The countryside is in danger of losing essential rural services such as transport, schools, hospitals and village shops, the alliance claims.
- The handgun ban. In the wake of the Dunblane massacre, is still deeply unpopular.
- Reform of the Common Agricultural Policy. Wanted by the alliance, which says all change must be regulated carefully.

Tories at the head of march

THE government turned out in force for yesterday's Countryside March, the last government, that is, under John Major.

William Hague led the Conservative Party's Westminster delegation.

Other members of the Major regime who made an appearance included Michael Howard, Sir Brian Mawhinney, Sir Norman Fowler, Peter Lilley, Gillian Shephard and Michael Ancram.

Sir George Young brought his bike.

The former deputy prime minister, Michael Heseltine, strolled at the front of the march, together with his daughter, Alexandra, and new granddaughter, Molly, aged seven months.

Even the disgraced former Conservative MP, Jonathan Aitken, turned up, with his two daughters.

The Government's deeply ambiguous response to the march was symbolised by the fact that two agriculture ministers turned up — although the Secretary of State, Jack Cunningham, stayed away.

It was made clear he was not wanted.

Michael Meacher, the Agriculture Minister, and his colleague, Lord Donoughue, did come but kept a low profile. They were joined by the pro-hunting Labour peer, Baroness Mallett.

The Liberal Democrats were represented by Paddy Ashdown; the former Liberal leader, David Steel; and Charles Kennedy MP.

They marched in a solitary line, having been genteelly ushered back behind a lead group of huntmen.

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March FM: You could hear the duke's millions in the jingles alone

THEY could hardly have called the one-day radio station reporting yesterday's pro-hunting rally Blood FM, so March FM — a name both resolute and neutral — had to do.

All the conventions of the old 1970s and 1980s demos were there: the organisers' estimates of half a million marchers (though one waited in vain for a police counter-estimate of 50,000), Peregine Worsthorne declaring "we shall overcome", and actor Anthony Andrews talking of protecting the environment.

But soon the station's distinctiveness became apparent. There was the sickness that one-day RSLs (restricted service licences) almost never display. You could hear the Duke of Westminster's millions in the jingles alone.

The Countryside March's own radio station, with its own very own jingles, was the station said could be bought along the roadside. There were plentiful interviews on how to deal with the media (one with BBC northern correspondent, indicating that the press constituency gets a lot of letters in a hurry).

And there were the advertisements for the National Farmers' Union, or for the British Equestrian Trades Association — that you never hear on Virgin or Classic FM.

Most bizarre was the music. Spice Girls aside, most of it was rousing marches — Land of Hope and Glory, Sousa's Dambusters theme, Rule Britannia — creating a weird affinity between a pro-blood sports rally and the Last Night of the Proms, and seeming to suggest that you can only be truly British if you live in the countryside and like to kill animals.

The medley included I Vow to Thee My Country, now indelibly celebrated as Diana, Princess of Wales's favourite hymn — though she loathed the countryside and wasn't too partial to hunting.

With the interviews all applauding the march's aims, and not a single note of dissent, the station conjured up an Eastern bloc station, a sort of Pravda FM.

What's extraordinary is how the licence was given. I can't recall such an explicitly partisan RSL before. Imagine how the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament would have relished a one-day station, a Peace FM, alongside its early 1980s demos.

On March 28 there will be a large march in London calling for the decriminalisation of cannibals. Can we look forward to Joint FM?

Mainstream advertisers have taken a while to get turned on to the idea that they could use black male models without necessarily losing sales or alienating their audience.

Modelling racism

page 8

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Berisha denies role in unrest

Karen Coleman in Tirana

THE former Albanian president Sali Berisha dismissed accusations yesterday of instigating trouble in the country a year after its descent into chaos following the collapse of pyramid investment schemes.

Mr Berisha has been accused of orchestrating instability in the past four weeks in an effort to topple the government and regain control.

The former president said the accusations by his opponents were false. "We strongly condemn any violent gesture, any terrorist gesture, and there will be no support from the Democratic Party for that," he said.

The prime minister, Fatos Nano, who was elected last year, has claimed the former president and his Democratic Party were behind the takeover of the northern town of Shkoder on February 22.

After a Berisha rally, armed gangs took control of the police station and released prisoners. They rampaged through Shkoder, looting and damaging buildings and setting fire to the library and university. They raided two banks, stealing money from safes.

Special forces regained control the following day. Some residents felt their town was being used as a political football by those interested in fomenting instability.

"I think this was pre-planned because how can 15 people take over the whole town?" said Spatin Sima,

who sells clothes at a dusty roadside in Shkoder.

"This is a political game, one party blames the other, which in turn blames its opponent. But the ordinary people are the ones who are suffering," Fatmir Lush, a construction worker, said.

The Shkoder events sparked memories of last year's chaos, when much of the country was in the hands of outlaws who looted shops, businesses and arms depots. Violence erupted after thousands lost their savings in pyramid investment schemes.

On March 3 1997 a state of emergency was declared. In April Italian troops were brought in to restore order. Elections in June resulted in President Berisha being ousted and a coalition government led by Mr Nano.

Now Mr Berisha, who was on the point of fleeing Albania last year, is trying to make a comeback. His party has held rallies in the capital, Tirana, amid calls for fresh elections. They accuse Mr Nano of reneging on promises to compensate those who lost their savings.

Mr Berisha is demanding the formation of a "technical government" of intellectuals and independents, a guise, analysts believe, for his own return to power. His chances are helped by the poor performance of the Nano regime.

Fatos Lubonja, a writer jailed under the communists, said: "It's a government made up of people who are without charisma. This has created a situation where Berisha is trying to destabilise the country."

Kosovo Albanians appeal to West after clashes with Serbian police

SERBIAN police swept through ethnic Albanian villages in Kosovo province yesterday as the Albanians' leader, Ibrahim Rugova, appealed to the West to stop police violence a day after clashes left at least seven people dead.

Mr Rugova appealed to the United States and the

European Union, saying "urgent measures" were needed to prevent Serbian attacks aimed at "instigating and causing panic" among the ethnic Albanian majority.

The US appealed for general restraint, but stopped short of condemning the Serbian authorities. — AP.

Olive workers pick jobs fight

Adele Gooch in Jaén

ACARD loosely tied around Manuel Rodríguez's neck said it all: "If my owner loses his job, I'll go to the knacker's."

Mr Rodríguez and the donkey were marching, with 100,000 others in Andalucía at the weekend to denounce European Union plans for reform of the olive industry which could threaten many jobs in one of the poorest parts of Spain.

Mr Rodríguez is at the bottom of the heap. A casual labourer travelling from estate to estate, he is, say the unions, one of those who will suffer most from reform.

Unemployment in Spain, at 20 per cent, is the highest in the EU. In Jaén, where 85 per cent of the economy depends on olives, one in three of the labour force is unemployed. In other parts of Andalucía the rate is almost double the national average.

"We're going to shut down Brussels and Europe," said Amador Gámez, clutching a large olive branch from a tree on his estate as he marched with 50,000 people in Jaén, scene of the largest demonstration.

The olive issue has turned the agriculture commissioner, Franz Fischer, into a national bogeyman. "Fischer we're against vasectomy," read a banner. "We want to stay productive."

Mr Fischer argues that the EU must curb subsidies, cut fraud and keep production down to prevent an olive oil lake. He is considering limiting production and allocating subsidies according to the number of trees rather than the amount of oil produced.

Spain, the world's top producer, says the plan would be unfair because its trees yield more than those of other countries, and because consumption is increasing and should be encouraged on health grounds.

There is an environmental factor too. The olive is one of the few crops to withstand the country's regular droughts.

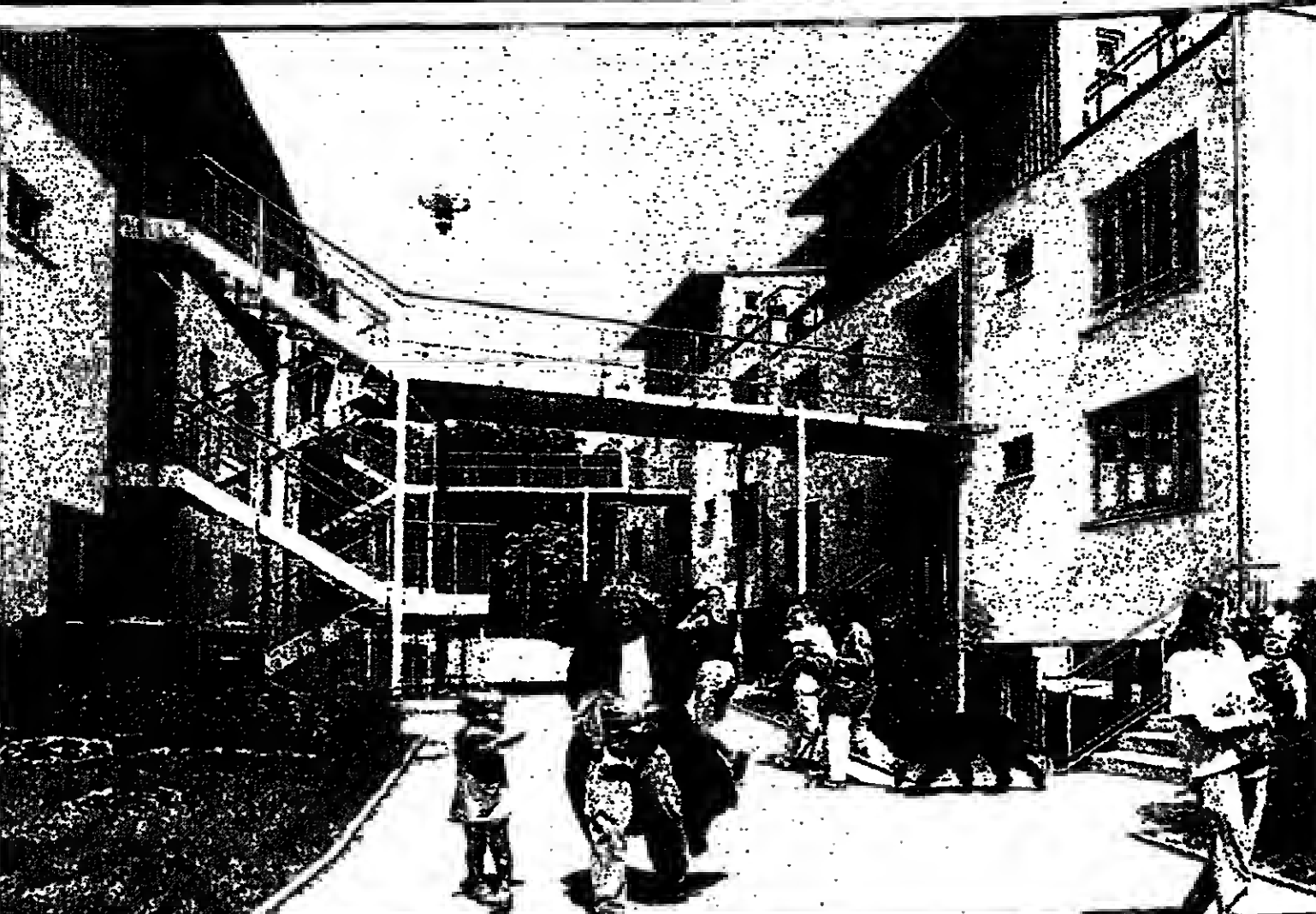
As for fraud, Spaniards say the Italians are the worst culprits. Italy buys a lot of Spanish oil to bottle it under domestic labels.

The protesters fear a sell-off because the government is involved in a broader battle to ensure enlargement does not eat into Spain's EU funds.

Worried at the strength of feeling, the agriculture minister, Loyola de Palacio, declined an invitation to Jaén but called a press conference to say the EU commissioner was "rethinking the tree system and considering extending subsidies to eating olives".

The campaigners were not convinced. At another march, in Córdoba, Andalucía's culture minister said: "This is about more than the olive: it's about our national identity, our way of life."

Design for living



Traffic-free safety in Europe's biggest housing estate designed for women
PHOTOGRAPH: M. VOLLMER

Kate Connolly visits a Viennese housing estate designed by four female architects to embody the principles of ease and convenience established by the woman who invented the modern fitted kitchen

Making light of women's work

DANIEL is poking his index finger into a low "child-friendly" keyhole.

Doris Heichenwelder pulls her two-year-old son away before he can do any damage.

"On a few occasions he has got his foot stuck down the side of the balcony," she complains. But apart from the perennial problem of how to keep a child out of mischief, Europe's largest housing estate designed by women for women answers many of her prayers.

"There are no dark corners or corridors, or curbs to tackle with a pram, and there's even a doctor's surgery and acupuncture here," says Ms Heichenwelder, who moved into the ground-floor flat at 119 Donaufeld Street in north-east Vienna in mid-November.

The estate, which contains 359 apartments, also has meeting halls, flats for the disabled, and a total ban on cars. There is a police station, a kindergarten, a nursery and shops.

Five years ago four female architects won a Vi-



An abundance of windows, winter gardens, glass roofs and short walkways characterise the design of an estate that combines functionalism with space and security
PHOTOGRAPH: KATE CONNOLLY

enna city council competition to design the six-acre Franzenwerkstadt (women's work town) in the district of Floridsdorf.

The result is a tall, white and grey, open-spaced housing estate with an abundance of windows, winter gardens, glass roofs and short walkways, com-

binning functionalism with space and security.

"The everyday lives of men and women differ substantially," said the chief architect, Franziska Ullman. "Working men leave the house early in the morning and are gone until evening so only tend to judge a living area for its

worth as a leisure space.

"But for a lot of women shopping, cooking and looking after kids is the order of the day. For that they require a totally different organisational structure."

The architects have a 101-year-old woman to thank for many of their "modern concepts". Austria's first

female architect, Margaret Schutte-Lihotsky, chaired the jury and oversaw the project from its conception to its realisation. She has devoted her life to improving the living conditions of working women throughout Europe.

"The basic principle in the design of housing should be to enable household tasks to be carried out in a practical and time-saving way," she said.

A tiny red-haired woman, she has been from an early age a self-proclaimed Marxist. In 1919, as a 23-year-old, she experienced post-war Vienna in social ruin.

She joined Vienna's Housing Movement and wrote her first essay: How can we make housework easier by building appropriate apartments?

From there she went on to design the Frankfurter Kitchen — the precursor of the modern fitted kitchen. "I built the prototype of a 1.9 by 3.4 metre kitchen and I measured with a stop watch how long it took me to do certain tasks, and on that I based the final design."

"It has been helping women to save time for years, and I will remember every centimetre of that kitchen until I die."

The kitchens on the housing estate are based on her Frankfurt philosophy. According to the different styles of apartment, they are either large and roomy meeting places or integrated into the living room to avoid the feeling of isolation.

More than half the flats on the estate are now occupied. There are male and female residents, but a much higher than average proportion are single mothers.

Up on a roof terrace with a view over the Danube and the wooded Leopoldsdorf, two mothers are chatting and hanging out their washing to dry.

"If a man was to have planned this he would have put the washing room in the basement," says Brigitte Krüger. "This would have then been rented out as an exclusive roof-terrace penthouse. But as it is we'll all get the chance to sunbathe up here."

Turkey tries to root out beards

With Islamist MPs cowed, dress codes are the new flashpoint, writes Chris Morris

THE year-long campaign by military leaders against Turkey's first Islamist-led government sparked a chain of events which culminated last week in a constitutional coup against the Welfare party and the reaffirmation of secular rule.

But while Welfare, which was the biggest party in parliament, has been banned for threatening secularism, the issues it raised when in power have not gone away.

Thousands of students have demonstrated repeatedly on the streets of Istanbul in recent days against restrictions imposed by the state on Islamic dress. Although there is some political desire to relax the restrictions, the military remains unmoved.

Istanbul University has temporarily suspended a decree barring students wearing headscarves or sporting beards from the campus, but the students are not satisfied. They have been spraying shaving foam on their faces to show how absurd they consider the attempt to ban beards.

The secularists struck back with a stunt of their own. A helicopter hired by the Post Office dropped thousands of leaflets on an Islamist demonstration, urging people to vote for the founder of the modern secular state, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. In Time magazine's poll to find the most influential person of the century.

The universities are just one of a number of battlegrounds in this cultural conflict. About 300 state school teachers are being investigated for wearing headscarves while giving lessons, and the scarf remains banned in most government offices. Compulsory secular education has been increased to eight years.

As a political movement, the Islamists are already looking to the future. A new party



An Istanbul University student protests against the ban on headscarves

replacing Welfare attracted about 120 MPs this week.

The Fazilet (Virtue) party has been keen to emphasise that it is not a mirror image of Welfare. Its leaders fear that if they cannot promote a different public image, the new party will suffer the same fate as the old one.

It is clear, however, that

Virtue will campaign on similar themes.

"Artificially created issues such as beards and headscarves should be abandoned at a time when Turkey has enough other problems," said Recai Kutan, its parliamentary leader.

Mr Kutan is a close aide of the Welfare leader, Necmettin Erbakan, who has been banned from party politics for five years.

Virtue has made a good start, but splits between Erbakan loyalists and a new generation of Islamist leaders loom in the background.

For the moment attention is focused on the attempt to impose a common dress code. The national security council, which brings together political and military leaders, discussed the issue on Thursday but papered over differences of opinion.

Some politicians, including the prime minister, Mesut Yilmaz, think the pressure should be eased.

"Universities should be looking after people's brains, not their clothes," one of his advisers said.

Palermo awakes to its black saint

John Hooper in Rome

AS Italians come to grips with the prospect of a multi-ethnic future, one of their biggest and most diverse cities is discovering it has had a black patron saint for almost 350 years.

On August 24 1652, the town council, or senate, of Palermo voted to make the then uncanonised Benedetto Manasseri co-protector of the city. But his cult waned and until very recently he had been all but forgotten on Sicily outside the Palermo parish where his body is preserved as a relic.

On Saturday night, however, theatre-goers in the city flocked to see the first of three works dedicated to St Benedetto the Moor, by the Sicilian playwright Beatrice Monroy.

Rome is to put on a three-week exhibition of paintings by Giuseppe Madalio, of which the centrepiece is a depiction of the saint. At the

University of Palermo, research has begun on a biography based on the documents used to secure his canonisation in 1807.

The driving force behind the revival is Palermo's left-wing but fervently Roman Catholic mayor, Leoluca Orlando, who discovered in the council's archives that the black saint had once been made the city's co-patron.

"For two years, I have been working to raise his status," he said. "People are afraid of black people coming into Europe. It is very important that the extreme periphery of Europe should have a saint whose skin is black."

Benedetto Manasseri was born in San Fraello near Messina — the son of an African slave. He spent most of his life in a monastery where he did menial chores. Yet even before his death in 1589, he was regarded as a saint, able to heal the sick and, though illiterate, resolve the most abstruse theological problems.

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News in brief

Harder line on Iraq urged by senators

LEADING senators called on President Bill Clinton yesterday to reverse course and make the ousting of Saddam Hussein the United States' top priority in Iraq. "I would say it's our goal to remove him from power because as long as he's there, we're faced with this enormous challenge," John McCain, a Republican on the armed services committee, said on NBC's television program Meet the Press. He was supported by Bob Kerrey, the Democratic vice-chairman of the select committee on intelligence, and the Democrat Patrick Leahy. — Reuters, Washington.

Burmese 'plotters' arrested

BURMESE authorities said yesterday that they had arrested 40 people plotting to assassinate the country's military leaders and bomb government buildings and foreign embassies. A government spokesman said the plot was hatched by members of the All Burma Student Democratic Front who fled after the military crushed a democracy uprising in 1988. They had intended to blow up the embassies of countries in the Association of South-East Asian Nations, which admitted Burma to full membership last year. — Nick Cummins, Reuters, Bangkok.

Strike looms in Zimbabwe

ZIMBABWE'S labour movement was heading for another confrontation with Robert Mugabe's government this week as it announced a two-day national general strike, starting tomorrow. The Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions, which represents more than half of those formally employed, is protesting at the government's failure to cut tax and lower food prices. To avoid the violence which marked a strike in December, the ZCTU urged strikers to stay at home. — Andrew McDermid, Harare.

Indian backroom deals begin

INDIA'S politicians and deal makers descended on the capital yesterday and prepared for the marathon game of numbers that will begin as general election results start arriving today. Television exit polls after the last main day of polling on Saturday predicted that, as in the 1996 elections, no party will win an outright majority. — Suzanne Goldenberg, New Delhi.

Pakistan launches census

TENS of thousands of troops have been deployed throughout Pakistan to prevent trouble as the country today begins its first population census for 17 years. The census was called off in 1981 after the authorities said they had received grossly exaggerated figures from many parts of the country. At stake is the allocation of assembly seats and the division of federal funds between the provinces. — Richard Golpin, Islamabad.

UK warship in Freetown

WARSHIPS from Britain and Nigeria docked yesterday at the main port in Sierra Leone's capital to beef up security in coastal waters. Lieutenant Steve Lawrence said Britain's HMS Cornwall would assist British diplomats returning to the country and provide support for humanitarian programmes. The West African peacekeeping force Ecomog took control of Freetown last month, but fighting continues in other parts of the country against troops loyal to the exiled junta leader Johnny Paul Koroma. — Reuters, Freetown.

Saharan voters identified

A UNITED Nations team in the Western Sahara has identified a total of 94,194 people as it tries to organise a referendum to determine whether the disputed territory becomes independent or integrated into Morocco, which claims sovereignty. Identification of Saharans is crucial to deciding who can vote. The referendum is due in December. — Reuters, Rabat.

Yeltsin reshuffle scorned

THE Russian Communist Party leader, Gennady Zyuganov, yesterday accused President Yeltsin and the prime minister, Viktor Chernomyrdin, of being too timid in their latest cabinet reshuffle. He said the sacking of three ministers on Saturday was irrelevant because key reformers, including Anatoly Chubais and Boris Nemtsov, remained in place. — Reuters, Moscow.

Love forced out into cold

A TURKISH couple who eloped at the weekend after one family blocked the marriage became lost in the mountains and would probably have to have their hands and feet amputated after locals found them badly frostbitten, the Sabah newspaper said yesterday. A man who helped them escape from the snow-capped peaks in the eastern mountains, near the town of Erzurum, was said to have fallen to 30C. — Reuters, Ankara.

Clinton aide attacks Starr

Martin Kettle in Washington

SENIOR White House adviser to President Bill Clinton fiercely attacked the Whitewater Independent Counsel, Kenneth Starr, yesterday calling him "a prosecutor on a mad mission from God" and "a constitutional illiterate who is trampling upon American liberty". Sidney Blumenthal, who was subpoenaed last week to give evidence in connection with the Monica Lewinsky affair, told the Guardian that Mr Starr was conducting "one of the most bizarre cases of prosecutorial abuse and misconduct in our nation's modern history". Mr Blumenthal said that when he was questioned by the federal grand jury in Washington last week he was asked: "Have you ever said anything positive about Kenneth Starr?" Mr Blumenthal said he told the investigators: "I cannot recall."

He said Mr Starr's staff put to him "a series of lunatic suggestions", all of which he denied. He said: "What Kenneth Starr calls misinformation is in fact information that originated with enterprising reporters." He was told to give details and hand over records of his telephone conversations with journalists, including contacts with the Guardian. As a government official Mr Blumenthal does not have the "first amendment right" enjoyed by journalists and others under the United States constitution, to protect sources and conversations from disclosure. He was subpoenaed last week after Mr Starr complained about an "avalanche of lies" concerning his investigation into allegations about Mr Clinton and Ms Lewinsky.

"I was summoned to a federal grand jury under the doctrine that anything that Kenneth Starr defines as misinformation about Kenneth Starr constitutes obstruction of justice and that it therefore falls to Kenneth Starr to investigate it," Mr Blumenthal said. "This isn't All The President's Men, it's The Crucible" he said in a reference to Arthur Miller's McCarthy-era play about 17th-century witch-hunts. Mr Blumenthal said of Mr Starr's investigation: "It's spooky. It's absurd. It has its moments of dark humour, but it's real. It's dangerous and it's not a game. It's a threat to our democracy."



Sidney Blumenthal: Accuses Monicagate investigator Kenneth Starr of conducting 'one of the most bizarre cases of prosecutorial abuse and misconduct in our nation's history'

link between the White House and Tony Blair's office. A vocal proponent of the view that the US right is out to get Mr Clinton by any means available, Mr Blumenthal has acquired nicknames such as "Sid Vicious". He is suing the cyber columnist Matt Drudge in a test case about personal allegations made on the Internet. Although Mr Blumenthal is personally disliked and even reviled by several members of the Washington press corps,

his subpoena has highlighted concern that Mr Starr's investigation is becoming a general fishing exercise against the Clinton White House. "Even Kenneth Starr's defenders think that this was over the line," Alan Murray, the Washington bureau chief of the Wall Street Journal, said yesterday. "Ken Starr succeeded in undermining himself in ways the White House could only have dreamed of," Time magazine comments today.

Mr Blumenthal's remarks underline how keen the White House is to shift the focus away from Mr Clinton's sex life towards wider public and political issues. That strategy has won wide public approval, boosting Mr Clinton's opinion poll ratings to record levels. The strategy will be put to an important test later this week when the president's close friend Vernon Jordan, who helped to find private sector work for Ms Lewinsky last year, answers his own subpoena from Mr Starr. Mr Jordan is the most important witness so far in the investigation. ● George W. Bush, the governor of Texas and son of former president George Bush, won a presidential straw poll of Republican activists from southern states yesterday, and a large majority predicted he would be the party's White House nominee for 2000.



As Suharto heads for an unchallenged seventh term as president of Indonesia, the future looks bleak for this child of the Jakarta slums

Suharto risks IMF deal by adding on extras

John Aglionby in Jakarta

PRESIDENT Suharto of Indonesia said yesterday that he would breach his agreement with the International Monetary Fund, complaining that the painful reforms the pact demands in return for a \$43 billion bailout are failing to reverse eight months of economic meltdown. He said he would fully implement the IMF accord, but intended to introduce "IMF-plus" measures, required because the existing package "had failed to resuscitate the economy" and was making people's lives harder. "The burden of responsibility rests squarely on our own shoulders," he said. "It is only our own actions that determine whether we succeed or fail to overcome the present crisis."

People's Consultative Assembly, the country's highest sovereign body which will elect a new president and vice-president. Despite its democratic trappings, the 1,000-member convention is considered no more than a rubber-stamp to legitimise Gen Suharto's regime. He handpicks most of the members, and the rest are vetted for their loyalty to him. His five factions have all nominated him as their only candidate in the March 10 vote. Jusuf Habibie, the research and technology minister, will be elected vice-president. One political analyst said he was dismayed but not surprised by the president's attitude. "Suharto said in his speech that the country should not look for scapegoats, but that is exactly what he is doing. He is blaming the IMF. The reality is that while some reforms have been implemented many others have not."

plus" would probably include a currency board which would peg the rupiah to a fixed rate against the US dollar. His domestic critics and most foreign governments and financial institutions oppose the currency peg. They say it would be indefensible, considering Indonesia's limited foreign reserves and its corrupt and opaque bureaucracy, and in the long term would cause even worse economic chaos. The former American vice-president Walter Mondale is expected in Jakarta today to express Washington's concern at the slow pace of reform and to tell Gen Suharto he must stick to the IMF plan. An unnamed Washington official hinted last week that unless Gen Suharto hastened much-needed reforms, such as introducing a bankruptcy law, the next \$3 billion tranche of the IMF aid would be withheld.

Israel offers Lebanon exit

David Sharrock in Jerusalem

ISRAEL raised the prospect this weekend of finally pulling its troops out of south Lebanon, when the prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, said he had "no qualms" about dismantling his self-declared security zone. In comments delivered against a backdrop of reports that Syria is again putting out peace feelers, Mr Netanyahu told a delegation of Canadian Jews in Jerusalem: "Israel is prepared to accept Security

Council Resolution 425 [of 1978] and pull out, on condition that the security of residents in the north be guaranteed, along with the security of our allies in Lebanon." Israel believes Syria is the key to getting a workable agreement, for which the quid pro quo would be withdrawal from the Golan Heights. It is the first time that Mr Netanyahu has explicitly stated he has no qualms about an immediate withdrawal.

in conjunction with a pull-out. Syria's response is more important, and Mr Netanyahu's comments suggest that the Middle East peace process may be heading towards warmer waters. Israeli media reported that Mr Netanyahu's aides will be in Europe this week to build on renewed Syrian contacts. A groundswell of Israeli public opinion favours a unilateral withdrawal from south Lebanon after 18 years of attacks on Israeli outposts in the buffer zone by the Hizbullah movement in January and a similar number last month.

Entertainment

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Cyprus 99 Caribbean 299
Chambers 99 India 299
Greece 109 S.Africa 399
Turkey 129 Far East 399
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Comment

Rome diary

John Hooper

My godson is in Rome with his parents at the moment. He is 14 years old, half-French and mad about military history. So one of the Italian journalists on the newspaper which hosts the Guardian's bureau suggested I take him to the Museo Napoleonico.

"There's another very interesting collection in the same building which was put together by a great Anglophile," he remarked. Then he added cryptically: "The Romans, of course, never go there." I asked: "Who is this 'great Anglophile'?" And all hell broke loose.

"Don't use the name," two of his colleagues shouted. A third made a sort of keening sound — "No, no, noooo" — while grabbing for his testicles and making a sign with the index and little fingers of one hand raised in the shape of horns. Both are reckoned in Italy to be ways of warding off the evil eye — the dreaded *malocchio*.

I had had my first, albeit indirect, encounter with what the Neapolitans call *jettatori* — Italians singled out by their compatriots as supposed bringers of bad luck. Some of these unfortunate are alive today.

There is an academic in Rome who, back in 1988, went down to Sicily to spread the revolution. The day after his much-publicised arrival, Rna erupted. He was straightaway identified as the cause and has ever since had to put up with the knowledge that, whenever people catch sight of him, they are discreetly making the sign of the horns and the men are groping for their balls.

Italians are intensely superstitious. Beneath that thick Catholic crust, there is the exuberantly bubbling magma of pagan belief. Poles suggest one Italian who consults a *magia* (soothsayer) at some time. Some magi have TV programmes to themselves on regional stations. Viewers ring in for live interpretation of the auguries, which are normally evaded from cars.

When I had success in persuading my friend to write down the name of the Anglophile, I realised he was rather more than that. Perhaps because of the evil legend surrounding him in his own country, he is better known and more respected in Britain. Mario Praz, whose master-work was *The Romantic Agony*, also became the world's greatest collector of the Empire style and the founder of the history of interior decoration. Yet the centenary of his birth in 1996 went largely unremarked in his native Italy.

The museum which carries his name is, in essence, his last resting place. It is a splendid tribute to the idiosyncratic vision of a great aesthete, although there are pieces which are unquestionably weird, like miniature portrait-sculpture in wax of a screaming man. And it is not hard to see how someone with such a taste for the off-beat might come to be thought fixed.

The truth of the legend seems to be a lot sadder. The lady who showed me up to his apartment said it was because of Praz's minor deformities — a cast one eye and a club foot that made him look distinctly sinister. "But he turned it to advantage, you know. If there was a particular piece he wanted, it is said he'd hint that it might be as well for the dealer not to tempt fate," she said.

I was the only person in the museum that morning. "Most of the Italians who come here are either people who know him when he was alive, or people who have read his book, *La Casa della Vita*. The second edition has a section devoted to this apartment at the end," said my escort. "A lot of the men keep their hands deep inside their pockets."

MR AITKEN THIS MESSAGE STARTS AN ARGUMENT BUT BREAKS OFF HALF WAY.



Country Folk Off...



It wasn't Harman who leaked me the budget. But here is its theme

Polly Toynbee



SO THE Government's fire-fighters are busy hosing down "wild" budget speculation. Well, they would, wouldn't they? The Prime Minister gave his cabinet a wiggling about budget leaks. The anti-Harman foghorns have been busily belching that it was all her, trying to save her skin. Not so. As ever, chance rather than conspiracy was the order of the day in last week's leaks. But it doesn't much matter who said what to whom, what matters is what will happen.

The Iron Chancellor shook his metal fist on Friday, warning against any "return to soft options in public spending", promising that "we will not sacrifice our spending discipline and commitment to prudence". Of course not. No one ever suggested that he intended to breach the Government's rigid two-year vow to stay within Tory spending limits.

The speculation has all been about what will happen in 1999, when the spending stranglehold ends, and barring Asian meltdown or other catastrophe, Treasury coffers will be brimming so full that public spending will have dropped to 38 per cent of GDP. When in the dying days of last government, William Waldegrave suggested in a lecture that the Tories should set themselves a target of reducing expenditure to below 40 per cent, everyone thought he had joined the ravine rightwing tendency, as it would mean unthinkable savage cuts. But so robust have been revenue flows since then, that even with paying back billions of national debt, everyone knows the Treasury will be flush in 1999.

Naturally that frightens those who hold the purse

strings. Once the floodgates are opened, what's to stop a tidal wave of demands, each hard-pressed department with a watertight story of desperate need? Tony Blair sees himself standing there with his finger in the dam as every minister clamours for more. Schools, hospitals, public transport, pensioners, crime and the poor — they all urgently need money. Brown's budget will flag up the post-1998 priorities, allowing us to understand a little more of what this government is really about.

Few doubt that at heart the Chancellor wants a more equal distribution of income (when resources allow, of course). Like most of his Cabinet colleagues, he represents a very poor constituency. Tories tend to see poverty as a think-tank abstraction, a matter of pulling distant levers, dangling sticks and carrots. Labour MPs, struggle every week with this messy complexity of the poor.

They know poverty is a tangled knot of string, no problem soluble without untangling the other knots too. Increasing benefits and especially financial incentives to work are only a part of the story. The government's imaginative plan for a large child care subsidy is one of those incentives — but also part of something much bigger and bolder.

Poverty and its roots — that is the real picture. Inside Number 10, the Social Exclusion Unit is pulling together the explosion of working groups in all the key departments, answerable to the Prime Minister, leading the push from the Cabinet committee on welfare reform. The Unit is focusing on some 3000 worst estates, looking at what works and what doesn't. Bad

housing, bad health, bad schools, bad children, bad parents, high crime, no work, drink and drugs — where do you begin?

Children are at the heart of it — admirable political long-termism, for the rewards may not show up in reduced other problems for years. There are already several different departmental research groups on children. The education department has its own Child-Care Unit, ensuring that the new child care includes high quality education as well — nursery teaching for the youngest, with teachers in home work clubs alongside after-school child minding.

The Number 10 unit has looked closely at American evidence from High Scope, an ongoing LBJ-era nursery scheme, which suggests that the long run if parents are brought in to raise their expectations, increasing their chances of working. One thing always leads to another. The structure of government is a dull subject, but the Unit will have to pull together all the disparate task forces. For everywhere — the home

office, health, education, social security, social services — Labour ministers are each pursuing their own strong personal interest in the poor. So will the Health Action Zones, Employment Zones and Education Zones be co-terminous, working together? Will they pool jealously guarded budgets? Will local authorities, police and health authorities share money on the ground in these key estates? Only the Unit can make it happen.

There were misleading stories recently that the Unit would send in "hit squads" to the worst estates — but their analysis of what works shows that would be a disaster. Regenerating buildings from the centre is easy, but often expensive. Crime is usually generated by the people in the estates and has to come from within those communities — the "human capital" in the jargon.

How do you find the local activists? The Single Regeneration Budget grants given to small areas have shown how local ownership is the only way — often by-passing obstructive other authorities. Sometimes it's led by people living there, usually women determined to improve their lot. Or it might be an energetic chair of a local authority committee.

Success depends on the local culture in the police, health authority and local government. Crime is usually the starting point for local people, but that quickly leads back to root causes and children. What do you do with vandalising 13 year olds, and how do you stop them getting that way?

That is where the Chancellor's child-care funding will be one key motor for everything else.

Delusions of power

Peter Preston



POWER. There's a lot of it about. Political power. The power of the press. Power to the people. Country power. Woman power. But there are also — from Mel C to Rupert M — the illusions of power. This is the time to test the illusions.

A few months ago, you may recall, the Spice Girls were finished. Everybody said so, therefore it had to be true. They'd sacked their manager and behaved badly on an obscure Spanish TV show. Their new album wasn't breaking any records. Spice World (the upcoming movie) was sure to be a trashy débauche. Middle-aged experts on the record-buying habits of 12-year-olds pontificated about market fickleness. The papers which had fuelled the early hype duly lowered the boom.

But here's a funny thing. The Girls began a new global tour in Dublin last week to universal ecstatic reviews. "Sophistication, polish, force of personality, verve, confidence, perfection" — an avalanche of adulation.

It sounded like a triumph of a comeback against the odds. Nobody, though, paused to point out that the Girls had never been away. The ex-manager hasn't been missed. The revised second album has sold in millions across five continents. The movie rode high for weeks in the American box office top ten. One day the critics will be right: the group will fracture and fade. But yesterday, and the day before, they were horribly wrong. The 12-year-olds raised two fingers to them and the titans of press power retired hurt.

If the media drew a spiced-up message from all this, it was that the media could get lost. Not power, only the illusion, and the self-delusion. Weakness is having to scurry back, covering your tracks. One definition of such weakness, for the moment, belongs with Mr Murdoch.

TO BE sure, the current spat seems to be about overweening, sinister power. Neither his friends nor his enemies have a vested interest in proclaiming anything else. News International is a mighty empire run by a demon king, right? It helps the empire to sing along with that chant. It comforts its competitors to denounce the supreme predator. And indeed — on sporting monopolies like the like — there are many shots in the Murdoch locker.

But there's nothing mighty, nothing demonic, about the HarperCollins débacle. Here's a brutal lesson in the limits of power. He bought a publishing company, The Sun may have seemed Wall Street smart: it could corner the market in big memoir advances to retired politicians, it could help the player play his games. But books aren't newspapers. Before they reach the readers, they have to make it — slowly, with time for argument — through a close-knit world of authors and editors cherishing their own strictly professional preoccupations. Once HarperCollins had signed Chris Patten's opus, sight unseen, there was no reasonable prospect of secretly filleting out the peppy bits which might give the Chinese indignation.

It was a doomed enterprise even to try. Honorable defection was always destined to head fanwards. But do the watching politicians see any comparison and draw any lessons from this swift humiliation? If they're keen readers of the Sun, for instance — and they surely are — last week provided a perfect text. The Fortnight One has spent nine vituperative months laying into the waste, the folly of the Dome. But now crucial cash and rented a

giant TV pavilion within the pending edifice — and guess what? No prizes. The Sun has effusively turned turtle. Hall to "Mandy Millennium", the wondrous architect of triumph to come. Let's all get behind this plan to put the Great back in Britain.

Who, I wonder, is supposed to take such stuff seriously? The return of the Spice Girls is serious, because it depends on ordinary people doing their thing regardless of what they were told to do. The Patten affair is serious, because Stuart Proffitt took up his job and walked into the open. But Dome conversions, in their crudity, simply make you giggle. Are Sun readers supposed to be too stupid to notice?

The question is serious, too, because of what comes next, what the politicians are truly nervous about: Europe. The figures are in, the dice are cast. Economic and monetary union is going ahead, with only Britain, Denmark, Sweden and Greece sitting on the sidelines. The prophets who said it could never happen have switched to saying that it may have happened too early. By midsummer, British industries will be pricing their advance order books in euros. It's started: it will finish.

But where's the matching campaign of debate and decision to match this simple truth? It coughs, mutters, clears its throat. We'll talk turkey sometime, but not yet. The press is an awful impediment, old boy. The might of Murdoch, the curse of the Sun, looms on every horizon. Why, even John Major may spill of a few beans there in his (HarperCollins) memoirs.

The cavalcade of current events, however, should make everyone — Tony Blair included — a great deal cooler.



The titans of press power retired hurt. If the media drew a message from all this, it was that the media could get lost

Mr Murdoch takes too much paranoid flak. He is a brilliant operator and risk taker who looks after number one. He doesn't deserve much of the demonisation. He has his human fallibilities. The empire is too hugely complex to be controlled in infinite detail: accidents will increasingly happen.

If a Chinese government anxious about a little blue book can make him wriggle, what has a popular and confident British government — able to take its case to the people — to fear? Who can say that, on the morning after a referendum, the Sun won't acknowledge reality, yet again, and start the old turtle wailing?

Mr Blair is thoughtfully analytical about his power. Inevitable majorities or no, he sees it as externally fragile, dependent on keeping together the odd coalition that took him to Downing Street. Such apprehensive watchfulness is an asset. Yesterday's country-side shepherds may be serious, but because the marchers are allowed to convince themselves of a serious seriousness, Jonathan Aitken may be leading the Defence Workers League round Hyde Park a week on Friday.

But there is a point when analysis turns to introspection if the people are left out of the equation: when power is only truly defined in the using of it. Rupert knows that. If Tony has a moment to switch on the TV, he'll see that the great beam on the face of Geri Spice means she knows it too.

GEC-Marconi retain disgraced politician Jonathan Aitken

Dirty arms deals

David Pallister

It seems a shameful move on the part of GEC-Marconi that it should hire Jonathan Aitken to help sell arms to the Middle East, as the company admitted doing at the weekend. Among the original causes of the Conservative former cabinet minister's disgrace was the exposure of his role in funneling commissions to the Saudi royal family.

Indeed, GEC was among Aitken's first Mid-East clients. In the mid 1970s, he negotiated with then GEC chairman Sir Arnold Weinstock the percentages of civil engineering contracts to be paid to the king's son, Prince Mohammed. In 1989, Aitken brokered another deal for the arms company BMARC, under which 15 per cent of a £500 million helicopter weapons' price would be handed over to Saudi royal

front-men if the contract was clinched. And he was closely involved with the notorious Al Yamamah arms deal, under which billions of pounds-worth of Tornado fighters are still being delivered to Saudi Arabia from British Aerospace, despite evidence that the then government lied about the existence of huge under-the-counter "sweeteners" to the Saudi royal family.

Documents that have come to light since the arrangement was launched by Mrs Thatcher in 1985, show suppliers secretly handed over 26 per cent "commissions" for Thorn-EMI bomb-fuses; 15 per cent or higher for Royal Ordnance bombs (the exact figure is described as an "official secret"); and according to writs recently issued, commissions of 15 per cent for the Rolls-Royce engines.

Aitken's one-time busi-

ness partner, Wafic Said, who represents the interests of Saudi royals, now agrees he helped broker Al Yamamah deal with British Aerospace. Companies connected to him controlled Mayfair and Chelsea apartments subsequently occupied by the chairman of British Aerospace, Dick Evans, and Mrs Thatcher's own son, Mark.

Recycling the Middle East's oceans of petrodollars has always been a tricky and sticky business. In an autocratic state like Saudi Arabia, ruled as a personal fiefdom by the al-Saud clique for the past 60 odd years, it was no matter that 20 per cent of the budget went on defence; that Saudi manpower was inadequate and inadequately trained; that all this expenditure gave no security without over-the-horizon back-up from the West.

The favoured people prospered, pocketing millions,

often for doing nothing more than making discreet introductions.

Al Yamamah, extended in 1983, after Aitken negotiated in a Ministerial role with Prince Mohammed in Riyadh, has been putting an estimated £2 billion a year into Britain's defence industry, supporting tens

Suppliers secretly handed over 26 per cent 'commissions'

of thousands of jobs. So why should this method of doing business matter? If this is what the Saudis want to do with their money is that not their business? The British taxpayer is not losing out as long as the Saudis or other Middle East states do not

default. Yet Al Yamamah supports a cruel and corrupt regime, a state that treats its millions of immigrant workers like chattels. (Slavery, after all, was only formally abolished in 1960s.) Talk of Saudi Arabia being a stabilising force in the Middle East ignores the fact that the al-Sauds have done more to foster the growth of Islamic fundamentalism than any other state except Iran.

Second, corruption flows both ways, which is why, as a defence minister, Aitken had his private £1,000 hotel bill paid for by the Saudi prince Mohammed — and then lied about it in court. And finally, bribery is wrong and corrupts genuine trade. Every country may do it, as the annual league table of the anti-corruption campaigners Transparency International shows. But that does not mean we should tolerate it.

Rural lobbies rides high

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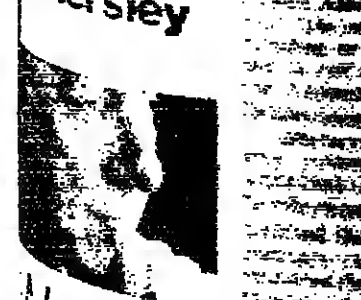
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Endpiece

Royattersley



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usions
power

Rural lobby rides high But is divided below

IT was a phenomenally successful march. Even the police counted 250,000. The organisers, as usual, counted more. And they may well have been right. It took five hours for all the marchers to leave the starting point. More than 2,000 coaches and 29 special trains brought them from every point in the country to the capital. London has not seen anything as large for over a decade. But was the Countryside Alliance right in its claim last night that the march had demonstrated "the rural lobby is alive and a force in politics"? A Labour Prime Minister, intent on representing as wide a constituency as possible, may be tempted to agree and make it even more difficult to ban fox hunting. That would be wrong.

The alliance is a coalition of contradictory interests. No wonder there were no speeches at the finishing point in Hyde Park. The conflicting interests would quickly have emerged: landowners v tenants, agri-businesses v smallholders, second-home owners v village workers. The

alliance, which is dominated by the hunting, shooting and fishing lobby, sensibly widened its membership to include all disaffected rural groups to strengthen its campaign against the private member's bill banning fox hunting. Undoubtedly most of yesterday's marchers did support hunting. People who are about to lose a privilege will always turn out in much larger numbers than the people who believe in it being removed but are not directly affected.

If a pressure group can organise an alliance of contradictory interests, why can't a government do the same? The reason why not is simple enough: the Countryside Alliance was organising a march, but Labour is running the country. A huge majority of people are opposed to fox hunting but Labour is wrestling with much bigger issues: constitutional change, welfare reform, Europe. That was why it was right to leave it to a private member's bill and a free vote. But Parliament should be given enough time to debate the issue. Opinion polls suggest the current bill, which will not get through for lack of time, is backed by five people for everyone opposed. Minorities deserve to have their community traditions treated with respect and only banned after careful consideration. But that is what has happened with

fox hunting. The arguments against are overwhelming. Indeed, opinion polls suggest even within rural communities, a majority favours banning hunting. It is not a question of animal rights but acceptable human behaviour. Where foxes need to be killed, let it be done by shooting. Turning their pursuit into a sport debases society.

The best way of splitting the Alliance is for Labour to ensure the next private member's bill banning hunting gets sufficient time. Once hunting is banned, the alliance will disappear. The large landowners are not interested in many of the other genuine rural issues which need addressing: loss of jobs, income, rural buses, housing, local schools and village shops. Labour is ideally placed to address these issues but should resist the calls to set up a special department for rural affairs. That would only further fragment transport and endanger environment protection.

Radio politics The BBC widens its view

THE GUARDIAN likes listening to Yesterday in Parliament: it always has. The 15-minute stroll through the proceedings of

the Palace of Westminster makes a pleasant change of pace after the alarm-clock urgency of the Today programme. For pointy-headed, political junkies and policy wonks it's a useful labour-saving device: Hansard in a digestible form, one that can be washed down with breakfast. For the general listener, it's the Radio 4 equivalent of muzak — background noise, pleasant and inoffensive.

But these are hardly sufficient arguments for Yesterday in Parliament to survive unchanged. The BBC wants to move it off FM, and consign to long wave — albeit with 10 minutes' more airtime. MPs are up in arms, furious that their deliberations will no longer be given the mass-reach they have enjoyed by piggybacking on the Today programme. The chairman of the Commons Culture Committee, Gerald Kaufman, fears long wave is a "ghetto" where "YIP" will languish in unheard obscurity. Worse still, the demotion of YIP is part of a raft of moves which MPs warn will lower Parliament's already-meagre on-air profile. TV's daily digest, The Record, is to be ditched and Radio 4's The Week in Westminster is to get a weaker slot. Next week Mr Kaufman and others will demand a change of heart from the BBC's chairman, Sir Christopher Blund.

He and the BBC should stand firm. Politics-addicts may love YIP but listening figures confirm it has become a specialist interest, like Test cricket. It makes perfect sense for it to join that other radio institution, Test Match Special, on long wave.

As for the broader set of changes, MPs will have to do better than reflexively accusing the Beeb of "dumbing down." Instead Mr Kaufman and his fellow parliamentarians should look to themselves. If Parliament is less relevant to the public — including Radio 4 listeners — maybe MPs bear some of the blame. As the rows of empty green benches confirm, honourable members recognised a while ago that the Chamber is no longer the heart of the action.

Real politics goes on elsewhere: in government departments, in TV and radio studios, and far away from London — in the shops, offices and homes where real people live and work. In this era of devolution, the BBC is right to recognise that British politics is no longer synonymous with Westminster.

Yesterday's countryside march was a genuine political event. If the corporation ends up covering Parliament less, but genuine politics more, it will deserve not condemnation but applause.

Letters to the Editor

Tarantino and degrading acts

AM I alone in finding Quentin Tarantino overdone, overhyped and overrated? I watched Pulp Fiction recently having been assured that it would have me rolling on the floor with mirth. Pulp Fiction is a depressing, pompous and pretentious piece of low-grade, meretricious trash devoid of warmth, wit or intelligence and filled with irritatingly banal, fatuous posturing by a half-witted assortment of narcissistic Hollywood luvvies.

If Tarantino is a genius (I must have knocked off the odd symphony or painted a few chapel ceilings and not told us. A survey of children in Glasgow's primary schools showed Pulp Fiction was their favourite movie. If scoring a hit with one's intellectual peers is the ultimate badge of artistic success, then Tarantino has attained it.

Ken MacIntyre, Guildford.

THE tiger which ripped off the arm of a circus worker was said by one newspaper to be only doing what "comes naturally". Especially if the cat is locked up for 23 hours a day and only let out to be degraded. William Benton, Birmingham.

AIN Gardner writes (Letters, February 28) that he always thought the A1 led to England not Scotland. No doubt the Scots have been conditioned by Dr Johnson's remark that the noblest prospect a Scotsman ever sees is the high road that leads him to England. Ronnie Eyres, London.

ANYONE with the benefit of an traditional education knows all roads lead to Rome. Arthur Musgrave, Bristol.

DOPS Steve Heptinstall (Letters, February 28) really think televising an English rugby victory over Wales would unite the UK? Danny McCulloch, London.

Open the debate on MMR

MY son was due to have his MMR vaccine a few months ago, coinciding with pre-publication reporting of Dr Wakefield's findings (Alert over child jabs, February 27). I consulted my GP, who was only able to supply pro-vaccination information. I resolved to investigate further. I telephoned the Department of Health and was told it was media hype and that vaccination was safe.

I also asked people who might have a different view. The information coming in shows the concerns raised in your article are the tip of an iceberg. The information includes: that potential side effects are more serious than those of the illnesses; that outbreaks occur more often in vaccinated children, who may develop atypical measles which can be more difficult to treat; that there can be damage to children's immune and central nervous systems.

It appears that a generation of vaccinated adults are now producing children with no natural immunity, while fatalities from illness are largely associated with malnutrition and poverty. The decrease in illnesses claimed as a result of vaccination occurred before the programmes began, as a result of improved public health.

Is it not time we were treated as intelligent adults capable of making informed decisions? Deborah Duffin, Cottenham, E. Yorks.

THE Atlanta Center for Disease Control warns of the dangers of shunning immunisation (Doctors' Dilemma, February 27), but the centre itself has identified 34 major side effects of childhood jabs, including asthma, blood disorders, polio, meningitis, diabetes, neurological disorders and hearing loss, not to mention seizures three times the national average. H Clarke, Bakewell, Derbyshire.

THE rubella vaccine has been highly successful in reducing the incidence of rubella infection and its devastating effects on unborn children. Between 1971 and 1975 at least 380 children were born with severe disabilities from CRS, many with deaf and blind, and often with heart, brain and physical impairments. Between 1990 and 1995, fewer than 25 babies were born with CRS, entirely owing to MMR. Rodney Clark, Chief executive, SENSE, London.

MY son, Callum, was given the MMR booster in February 1995. Shortly after he began to have violent diarrhoea. We had to restrict his diet: no dairy or egg products, nothing with chocolate in it. No one would say what had caused our healthy son to be so unwell. Now 10, Callum still has to

watch what he eats or he has diarrhoea. Our local medical practice does not believe that his problems were caused by the MMR vaccination. I, however, believe they were and have told many new parents in our area to think really hard before having their children receive this vaccination. Alyce Thomson, Anchester.

OUR 15-month-old son was due for his MMR last Friday when we saw your article. We cancelled his appointment. We had only agreed to the MMR after three months of consultation with the health authority.

We tried to get the vaccine split into the three separate ones, but were told this would be difficult, even impossible. When we finally got an answer we were told it could be split, but it would take five months to get the measles vaccine. As we were going abroad in April we reluctantly consented to the MMR.

We believe that vaccinations are important, but we can't see the need to have them together as a triple. The only reason we can see why this is done is to save money. The Government should take immediate action to ensure that parents who want the vaccinations are able to have them separately and without delay. Michelle and Steve Battlemuch, Nottingham.



The other half plays football, too

SO, David Lacey thinks that the FA Cup "is not impoverished; there's still a chance of a final between Arsenal and Leeds" (Barnesley's joy no skin off United's nose, G2, February 27). This is typical of the attitude of the national media. They are happy to waffle about the romance of the Cup when big teams go crashing out in the early rounds — so long as their "showpiece" final is not spoilt by gate-crashers from our local football's top six.

I suspect most of the footballing public will be more

than happy if West Ham overturn Arsenal in the quarter-finals. And I do apologise to Mr Lacey for hoping that my team, Wolves, win at Elland Road next Saturday. If the Cup final turns out to be between Wolves and Coventry, say, perhaps all you national journalists could decide to donate your free tickets to the fans of the two clubs. After all, you wouldn't enjoy the game, and you could write your patronising articles without seeing a ball being kicked. Michael Martin, Wolverhampton.

Planning plea

THE development of "brownfield" sites not merely provides homes but also removes the unsightly dereliction still prevalent in the inner cities (New homes for old plans by Prescott, February 29). It is much more attractive than the provision of homes in the green belt, with the resulting impact upon the environment.

Regalian has been a leader in urban regeneration throughout the 1980s and 1990s, taking a lead in the conversion of redundant office buildings to residential use. But we will have no choice but to back away if there is a lack of consultation from local planning authorities to review their procedures.

Many examples exist in central London of unreasonable delays and unrealistic demands from these authorities, inevitably delaying development, and thus community development. Regalian whole-

heartedly supports the need for a "more flexible approach to planning policy". Unfortunately, there has been little evidence of such an approach by planning authorities — for the policy proposed by John Prescott to succeed this flexible approach is even more essential.

The Government also has a role to play in resolving the shambles which still surrounds various PFI schemes. Developers are tired of "brave words" whether from the previous administration or the present Government. We want this policy to succeed — success is unfortunately not in our hands. David J Goldstone, Chairman, Regalian Properties plc, London.

We do not publish letters where only an e-mail address is supplied; please include a full postal address. We may edit letters shorter ones are more likely to appear. The Country Diary is on page 15.

Young people are not more selfish, just more in debt

THE challenge for many development agencies is how to promote host-country staff, who make up the largest part of their workforce. Nonetheless, interest in working for an international aid agency remains higher in Britain than Owen Bowcott's article suggests (Third World charity blames selfishness for volunteer crisis, February 27).

A survey of 116 British aid agencies by International Health Exchange and People in Aid found that 2,600 expatriate staff were recruited in 1996-97. Yet the group of agencies surveyed received 3,000 job inquiries a week. The expansion of university courses in development and humanitarian assistance is further testimony of interest and commitment from a generation that our research suggests is no more "selfish" than its predecessors.

But graduates now begin working life with loans to repay. The level of debt in the student population, not the size of bonuses in the City, is a more realistic indicator of the problem recruiters face. Sara Davidson, People in Aid, London.

IT is not only volunteers to work in the Third World who are in short supply. It is my impression, as someone who has been involved with the voluntary sector over many years, that it is becoming more and more difficult to

find volunteers of any age to do mundane but essential tasks for no financial reward. It may be more connected with 18 years of emphasis on self-reliance and the concept that there is no such thing as society as lack of concern for those in distant parts. Diane Munday, St Albans.

SARAH Fitzpatrick's flimsy justifications of personal politics and sensible self-interest come a lowly second to the way that high-salary careers are now being marketed to university students and the blinkered outlook this generates (Maggie made me and my generation, February 28).

Before even considering working in any kind of vocational career, many fine minds have been snapped up by huge firms, whose names have become familiar from their lavish presentations and their sponsoring of events and sports teams. All but a tiny fraction of the careers information available is orientated around banking, industry, consultancy, marketing and advertising.

The pervasiveness of this huge-salary culture is such that anyone who chooses not to take that path faces derision. The mere idea of employment outside of these corporate giants has disappeared off the agenda. Victoria Bream, Oxford University.

Note to unions

WILST representation and protection at work remain the main reasons why people join unions, there is a growing demand for individual advice on legal, employment and professional issues (nurses get 24-hour hotline to union advice, February 25). But research by the TUC points to a fall in the number of full-time officers, with each officer servicing an increasing number of members, up from

3,000 to 4,500. As pressures on officers rise there is the danger of more members being frustrated by the difficulty of receiving the advice they want, when they need it. To avoid this unions need an integrated strategy which combines effective use of full-time officers, development of strong and largely self-servicing workplace organisations, and provision of specialist advice to members through help-lines or other channels. Patrick Quinn, Devon.

King's killer

YOU referred to James Earl Ray as the assassin of Martin Luther King (World news in brief, February 28). Research by international human rights lawyer Dr William Pepper demonstrates beyond reasonable doubt the assassination was carried out by an agent of the US state. The King family is now convinced of Ray's innocence. Rev David Haslam, London W11.

Endpiece: Sins of the flesh

Roy Hattersley



WHY are evangelical Christians so obsessed with sex? Charity requires us to assume that they reject the devil and all his works. But they only burst into print when the little chap with horns and forked tail interferes with somebody's hormones — or when some ill-mannered clergyman says something sensible about love and libido. They are particularly exercised by what, in their tasteful way, they often call sodomy and insist that the scriptures are explicit in condemnation of something which, not being philosophy, they describe as unnatural. Unfortunately, believing

in the literal truth of the revealed word, they cannot recommend the Peter Abelard Patent Abstinence Guarantee. For "He whose testicles are crushed or whose male member is cut off shall not enter the Assembly of the Lord" — Deuteronomy 23:1.

Undeterred by such conservative evidence of the Bible's unreliability, a group of Northumberland vicars has claimed that respect for "elementary biblical morality" requires them to reject the authority of their recently installed bishop and offer their episcopal allegiance to a retired prelate who shares their fundamentalist views. Unfortunately, by doing so they have cast some doubt on the strength of their evangelical convictions, or at least the consistency with which they accept the wisdom of holy writ. The Bible regularly condemns dissent: "For rebellion is the sin of witchcraft" — Samuel 15:22. The Northumberland dissenters seem only to take the Bible seriously when it pronounces on the sins of the flesh. The new bishop fell from their grace when they were told that he said "homosexuality within a permanent loving relationship is no sin".

Integrity requires me to admit that I am biased in favour of Martin Newcastles, as he no doubt now signs himself. Some time ago, he found me lost in a prosperous south London suburb and abandoned his official duties in order to guide me back to civilisation. In those days, only a suffragan bishop and, as he stood on the pavement edge attempting to hail a taxi, he was wearing neither cope nor mitre. But his efforts on my behalf seemed refreshingly unepiscopal — at least as Dr Froude would have understood the pomp and dignity of that office. And he had just preached a sermon in which the contrast between the theologically impeccable message and the unconventional metaphor with which it was illustrated had given me great pleasure.

The Rt Rev Martin Wharton had compared the Almighty to a couple of predatory American widows who rejoiced to discover that a new resident in their Florida retirement home had just been released from prison after serving a life sentence for murdering his wife. "That means he is available," said one to the other. "Like them,"

said the bishop. "Our Lord will take anybody." As I applauded his outright rejection of Calvinism and its doctrine of redemption for only the elect, I feared that the more conventional members of a congregation might find the image slightly novel. It was, however, another manifestation of the bishop's inclusive view of Christianity — as witness his admirable belief that "God's love is for everyone, irrespective of their sexuality". It is by denying what, according to their faith, ought to be obvious truths, that the daft old men of Northumbria make me glad that I do not believe in their miracles and mysteries.

It has to be conceded that the Bible — particularly the Old Testament — contains a variety of ludicrous condemnations of homosexuality. But we are still left to wonder why the evangelicals are so obsessed with that particular subject and ignore so many other activities which the scriptures denounce. Why do we never read headlines which proclaim "Clergy refuse to accept bishop after learning of his investment in cocaine"? No Prince of the Church has, to my knowledge, ever been excommunicated

because he had a building society account. Yet the Biblical Concordance lists condemnations of usury from Exodus to Ezekiel, and explains that by usury the Bible means "any interests on a loan whether in money or wheat or other commodities".

The Hebrews, the Concordance explains, were particularly censorious about financiers who "received interest from any that borrowed for necessities". And the Old Testament specifically forbade it. "If thou lend money to any of my people that is poor by thee, thou should not be to him as a usurer, neither shalt thou lay upon him usury" — Exodus 22:25. That chapter forbids all sorts of sins and misdemeanours from trespass to fornication. There were bishops in support of yesterday's countryside march who, no doubt, thought that the right to roam came into the first category of crime. And condemnation of fornication is the invariable subject of sermons on Sundays when vicars cannot think of anything more original to say. But when and where will we hear it for usury?

You might hear it in your friendly neighbourhood mosque. For on the question of exacting interest on loans to the poor, the Koran and the Bible stand shoulder to shoulder. And pious Muslims take the prophet's stern injunctions very seriously. It may be that a few reformed evangelicals — my respect for David Shepherd prevents me from mentioning his name — have, in their time, cried out "Take thee no usury of him, but fear thy God" — Leviticus 25:36. But it does not seem to be the sort of "elementary biblical morality" that the heretic hounders of Newcastle feel obliged to go on about.

Perhaps they are right, as members of a global economy, to think that rules governing an ancient agrarian society cannot be applied to modern capitalism. But why do they believe that the pattern of personal relationships which was thought right at the time when Moses was advocating the sacrifice of whole herds is right for the age of the Common Agricultural Policy? Clearly the evangelicals of Northumbria pick and choose from the testaments. To them, a loving homosexual relationship is more sinful than financial exploitation. Perhaps it was only the gay money-lenders who were driven out of the Temple.

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10 OBITUARIES

Dermot Morgan

Smiles and a savage wit

DERMOT Morgan became famous in Britain as Father Ted in the surreal Channel 4 comedy series of the same name, about three bizarre priests living on a tiny island off Ireland's west coast, but in his own country he was known for so much more.

His friends, colleagues, admirers and fans in Ireland and elsewhere were delighted that Morgan had finally reached the big time, but regarded his British television success as no more than his due after years of struggle and setbacks at home as he courageously took on the monoliths of State, Church and Establishment. His sudden death at 45 has sent shock waves around the country, Irish radio and television was dominated yesterday by tributes, with some of those interviewed close to tears.

Morgan was, quite simply, the most influential Irish humorist of the past 20 years; a writer, a stand-up comedian with an outstanding talent for mimicry, a hit recording artist and — more than anything else — a savage and uncompromising satirist. *Scrap Saturday*, the radio show he created in the late 1980s with the writer and producer Gerry Steinbridge (featuring Fanny McQuinn, later to become Mrs Doyle of *Father Ted*), took as its targets lazy, self-serving and sometimes corrupt politicians and civil servants. At times it seemed as if the country stopped in its tracks for half an hour on Saturday morning, but it was dropped at the height of its popularity by RTE after, it has been said, political pressure. Fans of the show — and that meant most of Ireland — were outraged.

But not as outraged as Morgan. Always, always committed to chipping away at the sometimes impenetrable rock of complacent bureaucracy to find the nug-

get of truth, he once more went on the offensive, attacking those who had dropped the show and railing at a system where freedom of speech could be stifled. This closed all avenues of work in Ireland, making his later British TV triumph so much more gratifying.

After studying at University College, Dublin, Morgan became a teacher. He started submitting scripts and ideas to a popular television show and made the occasional appearance. He did stand-up in an era before the phenomenon of comedy clubs. "Being a comedian in Ireland in 1977 was very grim," he said. "There were no outlets. I don't know how the hell I cobble together enough gigs or appearances to get on a ladder towards something comedy-wise. It wasn't a particularly hospitable environment. I went to trade union clubs, all sorts of places, to get a start. They were crap and so was I."

'I wanted to do stuff that was taking on the establishment and bring a laugh and a poke and a slag at them'

to be honest with you! I was trying to find my métier. "I genuinely say with a bit of regret that I managed to get a career out of it at the end because I was a bit of a lost soul at that time. I wanted to do stuff that was satirical and taking on the establishment and bring a laugh and a poke and a slag at them. I think that out of stupidity, or doggedness, or stupid, stupid doggedness, I managed to stay on the track."

He gave up teaching to con-

centrate on comedy, and in the early 1980s created the imperishable television character, Father Trendy, an ingratiating priest who prided himself on his knowledge of popular culture and his ability to relate to young people but who was really as hopelessly out of touch as his older colleagues.

To capitalise on his growing fame, RTE tried to fashion Morgan into the Dave Allen mould — a bit of chat, a few sketches — but it was tame stuff for someone with such an inventive, mercurial mind and was not a success. Not until *Scrap Saturday* did he find a true home for his awesome talents as a debunker of cant and hypocrisy.

Perhaps it was the well-meaning but ineffectual buffoon Father Trendy that Graham Linehan and Arthur Mathews remembered when they started casting *Father Ted*. Although Morgan was no great shakes as an actor, he was perfect for the role, backed up by McLynn, the veteran comic actor Frank Kelly as Father Jack and the stand-up comedian Ardal O'Hanlon as the spectacularly dim Father Dougal.

The success of the series transformed Morgan's life and confirmed the strong self-belief that had kept him going through the hard times. "Father Ted had a profound personal effect on me in that it took the monkey off my back, that terrible feeling of frustration and being undervalued. "We all like to be valued, we all like to think that we're recognised in some way. I don't mean being recognised on the street, I mean credited with being able to do a good job. After *Scrap Saturday* I thought I'd done enough to probably be allowed to sit at the table, and when the table was promptly whipped out from under me I was considerably disappointed."

That Morgan's life should



Awesome talent for debunking cant and hypocrisy... Dermot Morgan

end the way it did is almost unbearably poignant. After filming the last studio scenes for what is now likely to be the final series of *Father Ted*, followed by a party on Friday, he collapsed and died at a dinner party he was hosting at his Richmond, Surrey, home two days before his 46th birthday. And his mind was buzzing with new ideas.

Offstage he was especially passionate about football and enjoyed the material rewards of fame. Known as a mischief-maker with a black sense of

humour, he didn't just turn on the comedy for his audience, but was endlessly entertaining, full of impressions and ad libs. He is survived by his partner Fiona and his three sons.

If Morgan was an angry humorist, that anger was fuelled by a passion for Ireland and a strong desire to change things for the better. His life was short but immensely influential, and he had the satisfaction of seeing some of those changes taking place. The past 20 years have seen the

country grow and reach a new maturity as hitherto hidden scandals and horrors are unearthed. Morgan helped the process with his finely-honed weapons of savage humour and scathing contempt. Ireland owes him a debt of gratitude that now can never be repaid.

Stephen Dixon

Dermot Morgan, comedian, writer, satirist, actor, born March 2, 1952; died February 28, 1998

Bernard Ledwidge

Our highly convivial man in Israel

SIR Bernard Ledwidge, who has died aged 82, had a long and exceptionally active life as a diplomat, ending his career as ambassador to Israel, and writer. He did important work both for his country and for the international community, as well as giving a great deal of pleasure to his friends.

He was educated at Cardinal Vaughan School and King's College, Cambridge. He went on to spend two years at Princeton as a Commonwealth Fund Fellow before joining the army in 1958. He served in the Royal Artillery and, from 1941-45 in the Indian Army.

In 1946 he was appointed private secretary to the permanent under-secretary of the India Office, and, later in the year, secretary of the Foreign Areas Committee of Enquiry, Burma. He was back in London, working at the Foreign Office from 1947 until 1949, when he was appointed British consul in St Louis. He remained in that position until 1952, when he became First Secretary at the British Embassy in Kabul.

For five vital years (1956-61) of the Cold War, he worked as political adviser to the British military government in Berlin, where he found time to indulge his passion for theatre by performing in amateur dramatics. In a 1956 production of *Love's Labour's Lost* at the British Centre, he almost stole the show with a suavely droll performance in the role of Boyce. After returning to London in 1961, he worked in the Foreign Office again for four years and was appointed CMO in 1964, before being sent in 1965 as minister to Paris, where General de Gaulle, who was re-elected that year as president, was opposing British entry to the European Community. Ledwidge, who frequently had dealings with him, was later to write a lengthy and perceptive biography, *De Gaulle* (1982), which was followed two years later by another book on him, this time written in French, *De Gaulle et Les Américains*.

After four years in Paris as

minister, Ledwidge was given the first of his two ambassadorial appointments. He was British ambassador to Finland (1969-72), and spent the next four years as our ambassador in Israel.

He was there during the Yom Kippur War of 1973, and he had a good deal of contact with the president, Golda Meir, until she resigned in 1974, unable to form a government when her Labour Party was held responsible for the lack of preparation before the war with the Arabs. She was succeeded by Yitzhak Rabin, and the same year — 1974 — Ledwidge received his knighthood.

After returning to England, he was elected as chairman of the United Kingdom Committee for the United Nations Children's Fund (Unicef), and held the position for 13 years. For five of those he was also a member of the Police Complaints Board.

He had two long and happy marriages, first in 1948 to Anne Kingsley, with whom he had a son and a daughter. His second marriage was to a charming and distinguished French novelist and short story writer, Flora Groult. The Ledwidges had homes in Paris and Kensington, where their dinner parties were unforgettable. In addition to the two books on De Gaulle, he wrote a novel, *Frontiers* (1979), and collaborated on a volume of short stories, *Nouvelles de Fin de siècle* (1991).

It was typical of him that in *Who's Who* he listed his recreations as "drinking and talking". The qualities he displayed in both activities included charm, discernment, moderation, conviviality and courtesy, and his conversation was almost always characterised by keen intelligence, political wisdom, the ability to understand viewpoints he did not share, perspicacity, dry humour and erudition.

Ronald Hayman

William Bernard John Ledwidge, diplomat and writer, born November 9, 1915; died February 20, 1998

Cicely Yudkin

The earthy reality of fine art

THE lecturer and artist Cicely Yudkin, who has died aged 81, energised people. During the 1960s and early 1970s her Harley Street house was a meeting place for artists, actors, writers, philosophers and film makers such as Philip Sutton, Eli Wallach, Alan Bennett, Roger Scruton, and Dick Lester. And the cook at her dinner parties was a young researcher into medieval cookery — Delia Smith.

Cis — as she was to all — was the wife of paediatrician Dr Sam Yudkin, and youngest child of an East End Jewish family in the clothing trade. Outrageous, generous, and unshockable, she brought an earthy life force to London's cultured society.

She had studied at St Martin's School of Art in the late 1940s but it was only after her husband's death in 1968 that she embarked on a career in art appreciation. She took an external London University art history diploma, then, aged 51 — but having removed 10 years from her official age — she started lecturing at Camden Adult Institute in 1970.

Her lectures were so popular that the education authorities granted her a dispensation to continue teaching after her 60th birthday. She was working until a few weeks before her death in adult education centres

around London, and still painting too.

Her lectures attracted large numbers of students and were distinguished by Cis's sense of theatre, her belief that artists are inseparable from their art, her knowledge of the most intimate details of artists' lives, and her grasp of the processes of painting. Thus did she, in conveying a sense of time and reality, open up fine art to many people, changing it, for some, from passing interest to lifelong passion. Books and doctoral theses have been dedicated to her by former students. In her eighties she was still conducting groups to art exhibitions at home and abroad.

On her many American trips she taped conversations with women artists such as Lee Krasner, Louise Nevelson and Elaine de Kooning that she embarked on a career in art history. In the early 1970s, with her friend Derek Shruh, her work on the then new Sotheby's training course helped make it world renowned and paved the way for fine art in other major auction houses.

My association with her started when I was her teacher in the 1960s. A young painter, in London for the first time, I was suddenly introduced to a milieu where ideas, gossip, political ideology, social concern and fun



Energising people... Cis Yudkin

mixed together. It gave my life a direction and meaning difficult to imagine without her stimulus. She was a real teacher. She leaves two children, Judy and John, and her beloved elder sister, Jenny.

Cis refused surgery after a brain tumour was diagnosed just before Christmas. She wanted to live the few weeks she knew she had left with the same zest as she had lived for the past 90 years.

Her funeral, a non-religious mixture of musical pieces and

tributes, attended by hundreds of people from all walks of life, was a celebration of a life rather than a mourning. She leaves two children, Judy and John, and her beloved elder sister, Jenny.

Robin Hazlewood

Cicely Yudkin, painter, lecturer, born October 29, 1915; died February 13, 1998

Kenneth Hyde

Educating the religious

THE crowning achievement of religious educator Dr Kenneth Hyde, who has died aged 83, was the 1990 publication of his *Religion in Childhood and Adolescence*, evaluating more than 1,700 studies carried out since the mid-1960s into the beliefs of children. Hyde was a significant contributor to the religious psychology of children and young people. The material for the book was assembled in the 1980s during his time as a senior research fellow at Birmingham University's School of Education.

Born in south London, the son of a bank clerk and a secretary, Hyde worked for a paint company, briefly studied part-time for a chemistry degree, then opted for the Baptist ministry. He trained at Spurgeon's College in Bristol and his first church was in Rockwell Green, near Wellington in Somerset. In 1940 he married Beatrice "Beattie" Drake and was posted to the Far East as a Royal Air Force chaplain.

In 1947 he resumed his ministry and young people. The material for the book was assembled in the 1980s during his time as a senior research fellow at Birmingham University's School of Education — his

PhD thesis was published in 1965 as *Religious Learning in Adolescence*. His second major book, *Religion and Slow Learners, A Research Study* appeared in 1969.

He lectured in religious education at Furzedown College between 1963 and 1971, then became Inner London Education Authority's leading religious education specialist. He chaired London University Institute of Education's board of studies for religion, and was chief examiner in religious studies for the Joint Matriculation Board.

After his retirement he became a honorary senior research fellow at Birmingham. His ecumenical interests had been developing and he joined the United Reformed Church, becoming an elder. In 1989 he and Beattie retired, yet again, and moved to Beverley in Yorkshire, but she soon died.

Hyde's quiet personality and meticulous scholarship shaped religious education for more than a quarter of a century, and he helped move it from its 1960s Sunday School image into the research-based curriculum subject it is today.

John Hull

Kenneth Hyde, religious educator, born August 10, 1914; died February 10, 1998



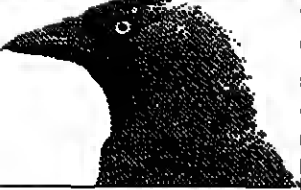
Drinking, talking, and books on De Gaulle... Sir Bernard

Birthdays

Arrowsmith, pacifist campaigner, 68; Margaret Barriell, ballerina, 61; Barry Blech, founder, London Mozart Players, 63; Kevin Carren, tennis player, 38; John Gardner, composer, 61; Mikhail Gorbachev, former president, USSR, 67; Sir Donald Gosling, joint chairman, National Car Parks Ltd, 69; Peter Heathfield, former general secretary, NUM, 68; Cardinal Basil Hume, Archbishop of Westminster, 75; Dame Naomi James, yachts-

woman, 49; Nicholas Jarrold, ambassador to Latvia, 52; Jennifer Jones, actress, 79; Grace Kennedy, singer, 63; George Layton, actor, comic writer, 54; Robert Lloyd, operatic bass, 57; Peter Longman, director, Museums and Galleries Commission, 52; Sir John Managrell, composer, 70; Lembit Oplik, Lih Dem MP, 33; John Tusa, broadcaster, 62; John Peter Rhys (J P R) Williams, rugby player and surgeon, 49; Ian Woosnam, golfer, 39.

Jackdaw



Poetic truth

IT'S JUST 150 years since *The Communist Manifesto* was published, in February 1848. Over that century and a half, different phrases have appeared to different plights and bopes. Today, it's the most poetic line in the whole tract that strikes home — "All that is solid melts into air."

Between the late 1840s and the late 1980s there was a flash of mutual recognition. Then as now, the ideology of a global free-market society had conquered the world, above all, Britain, and shattered all security, all traditional bonds, all expectations that tomorrow would be much like today. "All fixed, fast-frozen

relations, with their train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions are swept away, all new-formed ones become antiquated before they can ossify."

Then, much more than now, the rebellion against the ravages of uncontrolled free-market societies was beginning to gather its wits and rally its forces. ... Above all Marx and Engels failed to come to terms with nationalism, although it was to be the driving force of most of the 1848 revolutions. Memorably and wrongly, the Manifesto cries that "the working men have no country. We cannot take from them what they have not got." The authors declare that the victory of the proletariat within a nation will automatically end the hostility between nations. And they sketch an ominous portrait of the New Proletarian Man, all too similar to *Homo Sovieticus* of the distant future, "stripped of all trace of national character. Law, morality, religion, are to him so many bourgeois prejudices."

No one can say the workers of the world will not one day "brothers be for all that".

thought more in the sense of Robert Burns than *The Communist Manifesto*. And it was not Marx's fault that "proletarian internationalism" came to mean servile obedience to Soviet imperialism. But 150 years on, it's plain that the book's real weakness as a manual for revolution was its underestimate of the nation as a force for good or evil. And a proletarian stripped of national character "has yet to appear."

The Communist Manifesto is still a good read, according to the *New Statesman*.

Cold fish

PLANT LIFE is confined to a few mosses and snow algae, so it is hardly surprising to find that the largest land animals living in Antarctica are what would be considered virtually anywhere else. But that's above ground. Antarctica is surrounded by one of the most productive oceans in the world, and it is here that the continent really bursts into life.

Very little lives in the first 6-10 metres of the shore be-

cause of the scouring effects of grounded icebergs in summer and the rasping ice in winter. Descending deeper, the animal diversity increases, and remarkable animals are easily found. The particularly striking *Labridae* starfish is one such example. Only found in Antarctica, large specimens of this starfish can measure half a metre in diameter. This animal is unique among starfish, possessing outstretched arms that are sticky to the touch, used for catching anything that drifts past, including krill and small fish. In fact there are very few marine groups unrepresented in the Antarctic waters, large crustaceans, such as lobsters and crabs, and mussels being the main exceptions.

Dive International spends some time on ice.

Jackdaw wants jewels. E-mail: jackdaw@guardian.co.uk; fax: 0171-713 4366; write: Jackdaw, The Guardian, 119 Farringdon Road, London EC1R 3ER.

Hannah Pool

CORRECTIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

IN OUR report headed Rattigan and the curious case of the gay major, Page 3, February 25, we gave the impression that the Lord Chancellor embraced, among his many other duties, the censorship of stage plays. This was the role of the Lord Chamberlain, who stepped into the part towards the end of our report.

IN THE Space supplement (which is available with the Guardian in some areas), Page 15, February 20, reference was made to "footwear that Captain Scott and Titus Oates could only have dreamt of going out for some time in". Captain Scott was accompanied by Lawrence Oates, not Titus Oates, on his Antarctic expedition. It was Lawrence Oates who, on the morning of March 17, 1912, said (in the words of the *Dictionary of Notable Biography*) "I am just going outside and may be some time." never to be seen again. Titus Oates (1849-1905) was the inventor of the "Popish Plot".

IN A report headed, No solace in sight for Saunders, Page 19, February 18, we mentioned "Labour's new miscarriage of justice unit". The Criminal Cases Review Commission, to which this referred, was, in fact, set up by the previous Conservative government.

ON PAGE 15, February 16, we referred to Robin Askew in connection with the "Confessions" carry-ons of the 1960s. The star of those films was Robin Askew, although he had made several earlier films under the name, Robin Asquith. The Confessions series was not made in the 1960s. It began with *Confessions of a Window Cleaner* in 1974.

It is the policy of the Guardian to correct errors as soon as possible. Readers may contact the office of the Readers' Editor, Jan Mayes, by telephoning 0171 239 5889 between 11am and 5pm, Monday to Friday. Fax: 0171 339 9897. E-mail: readers@guardian.co.uk

A Country Diary

THE LAKE DISTRICT: Longedale was a delight this crisp, sunny morning — banks of snowdrops along the lane, hedges neatly trimmed, a new shimmer of green in the fields, the Sprint in merry spate and, in the distance, a dusting of snow on the high fells. From Sadgill we were making for Harter Fell, passing on the way, the fine cliff of Buckbarrow up which, almost 50 years ago, I had led a first ascent up slabs that now even get off the ground there today. Further on, it was disappointing to see the condition of the upper part of Gatescarth Pass, not visited for a few years. It is now a morass of deep ruts, boulders and mud that even the agile pack-horses that went this way would have had difficulty in negotiating. It was a relief to get to the upper slopes of Harter Fell and, on top, to tread sunlit snow for only the second time this winter. Much of Lakeland, from the Scalfells to High Street, was on view as well as Ingle-

borough, the Howgills and the Northern Pennines, the dusting of snow on north and east-facing slopes bringing out the crags into bold, black relief. It was biting cold in the north wind, and we were glad we had lunched in a sheltered rock corner on Little Harter, knowing there would be no down into the top. The walk down into the afternoon sunshine, over Kentmere Pike and Stigman, Knotts is always a delight — hands in pockets, if you like, until you come to the last, scramble down a rocky groove and then along the stony lane to sniff the first wood smoke from the Sadgill cottages.

A Horry Griffin

In Memoriam

WHITE, David Sydney, died 2nd March 1998. Forever remembered and loved missed. 0171 713 4501, or the 0171 713 4729 between 9am and 5pm Mon-Fri.

The Guardian
Ledwidge
r highly
vivial
n in Israel

The Guardian Monday March 2 1998

The Budget may address Labour's poor image on family benefit but there are lessons from overseas

FINANCE AND ECONOMICS 11

Up or down: it's a matter of opinion

Debate

Bridget Rosewell

THE Bank of England is exercised by the question of whether the economy is turning down and, if so, how fast. This is by no means an academic problem: whether we get yet another interest rate rise depends on the answer.

The Bank wants to know whether the existing policy stance will slow the economy sufficiently quickly to prevent upward pressure on earnings growth and retail inflation. The difficulty is that nobody knows. The latest data show (pretty inaccurately and subject to major revisions) where we have been but not much about where we are.

Moreover, the real conundrum is where we are going. We know that any changes in interest rates operate on the economy with a lag. It takes about 18 months to two years, according to the Bank, before the total impact of a change in interest rates is felt on inflation. In the past 10 months we have had five quarter-point rises in rates, so their impact is only beginning to be felt.

The monetary policy committee will have to raise rates again if there is clear evidence the heat has not been turned down enough. The committee's anti-inflation credibility will be dented and individual reputations tarnished. Small wonder the committee is split.

The economy appears to be hovering on the brink of a downturn, but we won't be sure for about a year. In 1996 it was still easy to find people who talked about "when the recession ends". In fact, the recession ended in 1992. However, it didn't look like the end of a recession: prices did not recover.

It used to be thought that we could use models to answer the question. These purported to be capable of providing an abstraction of how the economy worked, which could be used to describe its development into the future (or estimate the present). The experience of the past 20 years shows that they are not good enough.

When they give the right answer, it tends to be because their operation was adjusted by the judgments of the forecasters — and the same applies to the wrong answers.

Some argue that this is because the data are not good enough or the models too incomplete. But more and more effort and larger and larger models do not seem to have improved matters much. The Bank now uses a variety of forecasting methods, according to preference, judgment and the problem at hand.

Some argue that the whole process is a waste of time. They point out that, because no relationship can be discerned between one quarter's GDP and the next, the analysis of economic time series is useless. The fact that the economy grew this quarter provides no evidence that it will do so in the next. This conclusion vindicates the doubts about models that some users have had for some time. The analyst at the forefront of this argument, Paul Ormerod, was once a forecaster.

BUT it does not solve our problem. Some judgment has to be made about the level of the short-term interest rate. What committee members do is look around, read the available statistics, consult with experts, and make up their individual minds.

In this process, they ought to take all the views they can get — so here is mine. There is a lot of potential bad news out there. Consumers are cautious, spending heavily in the sales but not at Christmas; the East Asian crisis may yet be worse than it looks; investment is weak and the exchange rate is wreaking damage. Earnings are up, but only just above a sustainable rate, in spite of low unemployment. A target of 2.5 per cent is awfully precise in this uncertain world and a cautious person would want to under-shoot. I would rather take the risks on both sides and have a bit of growth as well.

Let the MPC do nothing for the next few months — and the next move may yet be down.

Bridget Rosewell chairs Business Strategies Ltd and is a special adviser to the Treasury Select Committee.

Indicators

TODAY — UK: Provisional M0 (Feb), UK Consumer Credit (Jan), UK Purchasing Managers' Report (Feb), UK Personal Income (Jan).

TOMORROW — UK: Official Reserves (Feb), UK New Homes Sales (Jan), UK Monetary Policy Committee Meeting.

UK PM Report on Services (Feb), THURSDAY — QER: Unemployment Rate (Feb), GBR Bundesbank Council Meeting, UK CBI Distributive Trades Survey (Feb).

FRIDAY — US: Unemployment Rate (Feb), US Non-Farm Payrolls (Feb), US Consumer Credit (Jan), US Source: HSBC Markets Limited.

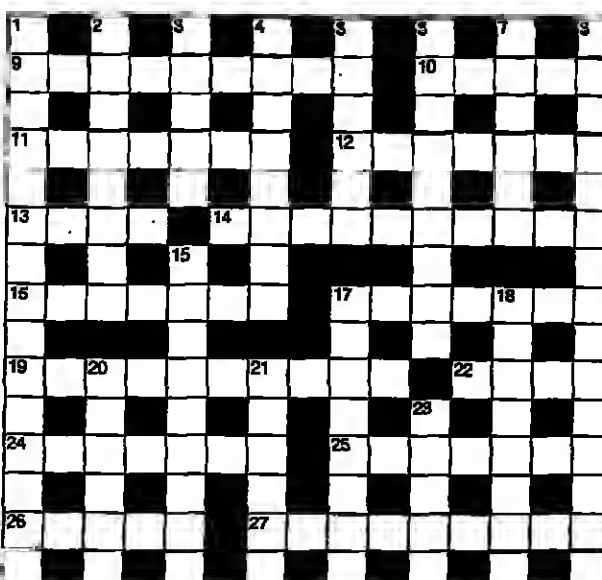
Tourist rates — bank sells

Australia 2.37	Germany 2.8044	Malaysia 6.12	Singapore 2.60
Austria 20.44	Greece 462.39	Malta 0.63	South Africa 7.93
Belgium 59.96	Hong Kong 12.40	Netherlands 3.2622	Spain 244.94
Canada 2.28	India 64.66	New Zealand 2.75	Sweden 12.95
Cyprus 0.85	Ireland 1.749	Norway 12.14	Switzerland 2.26
Denmark 11.14	Israel 5.90	Portugal 297.57	Turkey 362.520
Finland 6.90	Italy 2.684	Saudi Arabia 6.07	US 1.6124
France 6.72			

Supplied by NatWest Bank (except rates, which are at Friday's close)

Guardian Crossword No 21,211

Set by Rufus



Across

- Pledge given by senator is broken (9)
- Freezing — a coat is being provided (5)
- Put out of mind (7)
- Composition that calls for assurance of touch (7)
- Turn out to be in error about a point (4)
- Forever aimless (7,3)
- Beat, after exciting recount (7)
- Stage at which one may get on (3,4)
- I represent change and the readiness to accept it (10)
- Vagrant joins fireside circle (4)
- A pamphlet said to have some appeal (7)
- Controlling factor (7)

Down

- Exposed as a dummy (5,2,3,5)
- Wild sprees? Very strong coffee required (8)
- "Stretch" or "bird" (5)
- Half-lit of a cat on hand (8)
- A quick grasp of music (6)
- Talk the underworld way (9)
- I'm raised with anger that's more apparent than real (6)
- Sports day event in which competitors run until they drop (3-3-5,4)
- Grows wrinkled (9)
- Scene of low life (8)
- Nevertheless a street

Solution tomorrow

- Stuck? Then call our solutions line on 0800 333 228. Calls cost 50p per minute at all times. Service supplied by ATS.

NEWSPAPERS SUPPORT RECYCLING

Recycled paper made from 40% of the newsprint for UK newspapers from the first half of 1997.



Tax credit has its limit



Mark Atkinson

SO the Government does like women and children after all. The impression that it did not — created by the decision to press ahead with Tory lone-parent benefit cuts and replace Family Credit, which goes mainly to women, with a US-style working families tax credit, payable mainly to men — is expected to be corrected in the Budget.

Last week's stories hinting at Budget hand-outs for child care and increased benefits for low-income families with children suggest ministers were genuinely worried by the uproar over their policies towards the family. Although weekend government briefings have attempted to play down the extent of the largesse, ministers seem nevertheless to have taken on board criticisms that the Working Families Tax Credit would transfer spending power from women to men. Now it seems a method has been found for non-working women to receive their husbands' tax credit via the benefits system.

There were hints also that the child premium on income support — the amount for each child in families on benefit — will be increased. And in addition all parents in households earning less than £20,000 will get extra help towards child care costs. These measures would obviously be welcome but would go a long way to justifying the rhetoric coming out

of the Treasury that this will be a Budget which will put women and children first (though the Chancellor would be wise not to press that claim too far for fear of inviting comparisons with the Titanic).

Combined with other changes to the tax and benefits system designed to make the low paid better off — a starting rate for tax of 10p, reduced national insurance contributions, and an easing of the rate at which benefits are withdrawn as earnings rise — the overall package could lift families out of poverty and make transitions back into work easier.

But the devil will be in the detail. In a report published today, the Joseph Rowntree Foundation warns that overseas research shows tax credit systems are not a magic formula. The Canadians abandoned theirs after discovering it reduced incentives to work in twice as many cases as it improved them.

It might pay Mr Brown to study closely, if he has not already done so, the experiences of Canada and Australia which have both adopted super child benefit. This rolls all state help for child-rearing into a single universal payment, payable to working and non-working families.

Two studies, the first by Jane Millar of the University of Bath, the second by Michael Medelson, of the Caledonian Institute of Social Policy in Toronto, suggest such a scheme would have much to recommend it.

So how would a super child benefit work in practice? In Britain it would involve merging universal child benefit, the premiums in income support for non-working families, the in-work benefit family credit, both of which are means tested, and possibly even the married couple's allowance, although the last is not strictly speaking a child-related tax break.

This integrated benefit

would be payable to all families with children. To make a real difference to reducing child poverty it would probably have to equal more than a sum of its parts.

The advantages include: First, it will be simpler to understand than the current system. Families get it regardless of whether they are working or not and it is not reduced when their earnings rise — except for the rich. Under the current system, even the Department for Social Security's computer program takes a good 15 minutes and a string of questions to work out how much a job will affect entitlement.

Second, because it is universal it promotes cohesion and inclusion. It excludes only the rich, rather than including only the poor.

Third, it does not target only working families so it

will help to overcome the unemployment trap, whereby you lose out of work benefits as soon as you take up a job.

For example, you cannot normally get income support if you or your partner are in full-time paid work, meaning 16 hours or more each week.

Enhancing child benefit could be quite expensive. As an illustration of this, it would cost the Exchequer an extra £7 billion to double child benefit, currently worth around £11 a week for the first child.

The costs could be mitigated by subjecting the super child benefit to an affluence test. In other words, high-income families would have the benefit withdrawn gradually until you get to a certain level where it would be removed altogether.

Despite the protests which followed Harriet Harman's floating of the idea of an afflu-

ence test in relation to child benefit, there remains a compelling case for one, even if the manifesto commitment to retaining universal child benefit makes change this side of the next election tricky.

It is plainly absurd that a captain of industry with children should receive the same amount in child benefit as his office cleaner.

Fifth, it seamlessly smoothes the transition between unemployment and work because there would be no need to make a fresh claim (as there is now when families move from income support to family credit) and the flat structure ensures that the super child benefit will not be clawed immediately back as income rises.

As well as the extra cost involved, there is also the question of how you assess entitlement.

Should it be done through the benefits system or the tax system?

Since each deals with different customers, the benefits system with the jobless and low paid, the tax system with everyone else, neither would

Brown should study Australia and Canada which both have super child benefit, a universal payment for working and non-working families

does not erect artificial barriers between the "good" poor — working households — and the "bad" poor who, for whatever reasons, are not in jobs.

Fourth, it allows single parents, men or women, who do not want to work the opportunity to stay at home and look after their children rather than farm them out to someone else.

Fifth, it seamlessly smoothes the transition between unemployment and work because there would be no need to make a fresh claim (as there is now when families move from income support to family credit) and the flat structure ensures that the super child benefit will not be clawed immediately back as income rises.

As well as the extra cost involved, there is also the question of how you assess entitlement.

Should it be done through the benefits system or the tax system?

Since each deals with different customers, the benefits system with the jobless and low paid, the tax system with everyone else, neither would

be particularly satisfactory on their own.

The unit of assessment is also different. In the case of the benefits system it is the household, whereas the tax system assesses individuals.

So that means the tax system has no idea of whether you are a low-paid man who is struggling to feed a family of five or the spouse of a rich female barrister who is keeping you in the style to which you are accustomed.

An integrated approach would be better — either by having the income of everyone who wants the benefit assessed by the Benefits Agency or through the tax system.

The latter is relatively easy in Australia and Canada where nearly everyone files an annual household tax return.

But in the UK, where Pay As You Earn tax systems were invented, most of the basic administration for people with straightforward tax affairs is done by employers. Hence most people do not fill in an annual tax return which could include information about their household income.

Here only certain categories of employees, including 40 per cent taxpayers and the self-employed, are required to fill in tax returns.

The UK would have to move towards the Canadian and Australian systems or require more families to have their income assessed by the benefits office for an integrated child benefit to succeed.

Jane Millar says the problem can be addressed by getting people to give the tax numbers of their spouse/partner on their tax return and then the tax office marrying up the information. Canada and Australia do this.

All of this throws up complicated administrative issues which super child benefit will not be the inevitable rabbit that Mr Brown pulls out of his hat on

Germany's euro joy diluted by challenge to figures

Jan Traynor in Hannover and Martin Walker in Brussels

GERMAN satisfaction at making the grade for the single European currency was dealt a double blow at the weekend.

First, the powerful southern state of Bavaria warned it may seek to delay the euro and then economy experts challenged the credibility of Friday's figures showing that

Germany meets the criteria. Erwin Huber, the Bavarian finance minister, demanded a rigorous examination of the economic data for all countries signing up and threatened to take the issue to Germany's supreme court.

Germany's Federal Statistics office said the nation's 1997 budget deficit totalled 2.7 per cent of gross domestic product — well under the 3 per cent limit required. The Bavarian prime minister, Ed-

mund Stoiber, compounded the threat by signalling that Bavaria could vote against the euro when it comes before both houses of the German parliament next month.

Germany's 16 states are represented in the upper house or Bundesrat.

The prestigious German Economics Research Institute said that, using the same data adduced on Friday, it had calculated the budget deficit at 3.3 per cent of gross domestic product for the first nine months of last year.

"According to the results presented now, public investment would have had to fall 23 per cent in the last quarter. Scarcely believable," said institute analyst Friederike Speiser.

Bavaria's main concern is whether Italy, although posting qualifying figures last week, can sustain its fiscal and monetary austerity in the longer term.

Reports in Bonn, meanwhile, said that Germany and France have resolved their tussle over who should be the first head of the European Central Bank.

Paris has relinquished its claim in return for assurances that it will be able to name the successor.

The alleged deal should clear the way for the Dutch head of the European Monetary Institute, Wim Duisenberg, to become the first ECB chief.



Duisenberg, likely ECB chief

European Parliament tries to gain democratic oversight over the institution by threatening to hold American-style confirmation proceedings for candidates for the ECB board.

TOURIST RATES — BANK SELL			
Australia 2.37	Germany 2.8044	Malaysia 6.12	Singapore 2.60
Austria 20.44	Greece 462.39	Malta 0.63	South Africa 7.93
Belgium 59.96	Hong Kong 12.40	Netherlands 3.2622	Spain 244.94
Canada 2.28	India 64.66	New Zealand 2.75	Sweden 12.95
Cyprus 0.85	Ireland 1.749	Norway 12.14	Switzerland 2.26
Denmark 11.14	Israel 5.90	Portugal 297.57	Turkey 362.520
Finland 6.90	Italy 2.684	Saudi Arabia 6.07	USA 1.6124
France 6.72			

Supplied by NatWest (excluding rates, which are at Friday's close)

12 SPORTS NEWS

Racing

McCoy charges towards record

Chris Hawkins charts the career of the Irishman who is setting new standards

TONY MCCOY became the second jockey in the history of National Hunt racing to reach 200 winners in a season when he pulled out of the Kempton Park on Saturday.

Only Peter Scudamore, who rode a record 221 winners in 1988-89, has previously passed the double century mark and McCoy looks certain, barring injury, to set a new best with three months of the season remaining.

John Francoise, who rode 1138 winners during a 16-year career but never more than 131 in a season, was arguably the supreme jump jockey.

The almost imperceptible help he gave his mounts made him the personification of the phrase "poetry in motion" and McCoy will never match his style. But Francoise is a

great fan of the 23-year-old Irishman and says: "He never seems to give up and I've seen him win on horses that have no right to be in the winners' circle. Tony has pulled out of countless races out of the fire but his Cheltenham Gold Cup win on Mr Mulligan last season was superb. He made a difficult ride look so easy."

It all began for McCoy when his dad, who runs a post office and village store in Moneyglass, County Antrim, put him on the family mare when he was two.

But although potty about football and Arsenal in particular, he did not get the bug until he was 10 when he rode an old racehorse at the nearby stables of Billy Rock, a small-time trainer who immediately spotted McCoy's potential.

"When he was 12 he came

to work for me on Saturdays," recalls Rock. "I let him ride two of my racehorses round the all-weather gallop and the kid was hooked. I don't know what he had. It was some kind of uncanny gift."

"He'd only a handful of riding lessons but even at that age could get on the biggest horse and ride it round a field on a slack rein. If I hadn't seen it with my own eyes I would never have believed it. Nobody taught McCoy — he taught himself."

McCoy moved on to Jim Bolger's big flat yard at Coolcullen when he was 15 but increasing weight meant he had to switch to jumping and he made a big decision to come to England in the summer of 1994 and ride for Toby Balding.

He tells a story about his first ride: "It was at Stratford and for some reason I didn't have any riding boots with me. John Buckingham, the weighing-room valet, chucked me a pair and said 'try these' — they're Peter Scudamore's old boots, but you'll never be able to fill 'em."

Little did Buckingham know and few could have predicted McCoy's meteoric rise in his first season he was top conditional rider with 74 winners and incredibly a year later was champion jockey with 175 successes.

Teaming up with Martin Pipe the following season meant an amalgam of the two professionals and they have now become an irresistible force, garnering prizes and sweeping all aside like a juggernaut.

Pipe is a man of few words but he sums up McCoy thus: "He tries 10 per cent on everything he rides. He is unbeatable in the championship. I've been associated with Peter Scudamore and Richard Dunwoody — great men, great champions — but Tony has done it all in so much shorter time."

Grand National not on agenda for trial winner Dom Samourai

WHILE Tony McCoy was occupied at Kempton, Chris Maude was doing the business for Martin Pipe at Haydock on Saturday, landing a double for him on Dom Samourai and Abbot Horn before a record crowd of over 12,000, writes Chris Hawkins.

Dom Samourai stays all day and relished the three-and-a-half miles of the Greenlands Grand National Trial beating Him Of Fraise by seven lengths. But the grey seven-year-old, who is on the small side, is not entered in the Martell National at Aintree because connections are not keen to see him tackling the fences. The Midlands National on March 21 and the Scot-

tish National are the likely targets provided the ground is soft.

Him Of Fraise came out best of the 11 Martell National entries in the race and is on course for Aintree where he has set 7th and would benefit from a rise in the weights headed by Sun Bay.

At Kempton the Racing Post Chase went to Super Tactics, ridden by Andrew Thornton. Robert Ainslie, trainer of the winner, revealed that he thought Super Tactics was short of a gallop and expects the ten-year-old to improve although there will be nothing for him at Cheltenham or Aintree because he must have a right-hand kick.



Champion show... Tony McCoy rejoices after hitting the 200 mark

Motor Sport

Patient Burns poised for win in Kenya rally

David Williams in Nairobi

WITH barely a quarter of the Safari Rally remaining, Richard Burns stands on the verge of winning his first world championship rally after a day of carnage on the roads of northern Kenya.

He battled for more than 600 miles with a slipping clutch, survived a high-speed spin unscathed and lost time with an overheating engine as the rally crossed the equator. Yet he kept within range of his Mitsubishi team leader, the world champion Tommi Mäkinen, and his fellow Briton Colin McRae, who had rocketed from seventh to second place after losing time with two punctures on Saturday.

Burns' persistence was rewarded late yesterday after

noon when McRae dropped out with engine failure in his Subaru and Mäkinen soon succumbed to a similar problem.

"It was frustrating to start with but that's what the Safari is about," said a weary Burns, streaked with sweat and dust. "If I can stay trouble-free it will be all right, but I'm not even thinking about the finish."

Burns, youngest of the professional drivers, will be under immense pressure today as he nurses a six-minute lead — a slender margin by Safari standards — over the Finnish veteran Ari Vatanen in a Ford.

Burns is the only driver in the top five who has never been world champion, but it says much for his growing reputation that he is not believed to be a test of nerve and judgment.

Sailing

Conner's crew entangled in snagged seaweed row

Bob Fisher

TOSHIBA faces disqualification from the Whitbread Round the World Race because she used her engine — in reverse — to clear clumps of seaweed from her underside.

The race committee has lodged a protest against Dennis Conner's boat, which was sixth into Sao Sebastiao on Saturday morning after the fifth leg from Auckland.

The committee says that use of the engine a week ago last Friday breached the Racing Rules, and says the situation did not constitute an emergency.

The episode became public after Toshiba's captain Paul

Standbridge and crew member Kelvin Harrop recorded it in the race document, which all crew must sign.

The incident was not reported immediately, as it should have been, nor was the fact that the propeller shaft seal had been broken. Ian Bailey-Willmot, the race director, said the matter was "very serious".

The fact that only two of the crew admitted the rule infringement is strange, as this is a breach of the rules which could see Toshiba disqualified from the leg and possibly banned from further participation in the race. All 12 on board could also be banned from sailing in future.

The International Jury is likely to rule early this week.

Newcastle runners and riders plus form guide

CHRIS HAWKINS	TOP FORM
2.20	Shiloh
2.50	Shiloh's Year Man
3.20	Shiloh's Year Man
3.50	Shiloh's Year Man
4.25	Shiloh's Year Man
4.55	Shiloh's Year Man

Left-handed circuit of 1m17 with 200yd run-in. Steady rise in home straight of 41 makes this a tricky race. A good chance for Shiloh's Year Man. A. Donnelly, 1001 miles.

Several days yesterday: None.

Unlabeled first time: 2.20 Alphonse, 2.50 Alphonse, 3.20 Alphonse, 3.50 Alphonse, 4.25 Alphonse, 4.55 Alphonse.

Figures in brackets after horse's name denote days since last outing. F, flat.

2.20 ADVENTURE HURDLE	2m 4.42 (13 declared)
1	5343 Alphonse (10) M. J. Donnelly 5-11-8
2	30 Alphonse (10) M. J. Donnelly 5-11-8
3	1244 Alphonse (10) M. J. Donnelly 5-11-8
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10	1244 Alphonse (10) M. J. Donnelly 5-11-8

2.50 STEPHEN EASTON HURDLE	2m 4.42 (13 declared)
1	4414 Alphonse (10) M. J. Donnelly 5-11-8
2	30 Alphonse (10) M. J. Donnelly 5-11-8
3	1244 Alphonse (10) M. J. Donnelly 5-11-8
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9	1244 Alphonse (10) M. J. Donnelly 5-11-8
10	1244 Alphonse (10) M. J. Donnelly 5-11-8

3.20 NORTHERN HANDICAP	2m 4.42 (13 declared)
1	4414 Alphonse (10) M. J. Donnelly 5-11-8
2	30 Alphonse (10) M. J. Donnelly 5-11-8
3	1244 Alphonse (10) M. J. Donnelly 5-11-8
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3.50 KID & SPUR HANDICAP	2m 4.42 (13 declared)
1	4414 Alphonse (10) M. J. Donnelly 5-11-8
2	30 Alphonse (10) M. J. Donnelly 5-11-8
3	1244 Alphonse (10) M. J. Donnelly 5-11-8
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9	1244 Alphonse (10) M. J. Donnelly 5-11-8
10	1244 Alphonse (10) M. J. Donnelly 5-11-8

4.55 ST. MARY'S HURDLE	2m 4.42 (13 declared)
1	4414 Alphonse (10) M. J. Donnelly 5-11-8
2	30 Alphonse (10) M. J. Donnelly 5-11-8
3	1244 Alphonse (10) M. J. Donnelly 5-11-8
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5.05 ST. MARY'S HURDLE	2m 4.42 (13 declared)
1	4414 Alphonse (10) M. J. Donnelly 5-11-8
2	30 Alphonse (10) M. J. Donnelly 5-11-8
3	1244 Alphonse (10) M. J. Donnelly 5-11-8
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10	1244 Alphonse (10) M. J. Donnelly 5-11-8

5.35 ST. MARY'S HURDLE	2m 4.42 (13 declared)
1	4414 Alphonse (10) M. J. Donnelly 5-11-8
2	30 Alphonse (10) M. J. Donnelly 5-11-8
3	1244 Alphonse (10) M. J. Donnelly 5-11-8
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5.55 ST. MARY'S HURDLE	2m 4.42 (13 declared)
1	4414 Alphonse (10) M. J. Donnelly 5-11-8
2	30 Alphonse (10) M. J. Donnelly 5-11-8
3	1244 Alphonse (10) M. J. Donnelly 5-11-8
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6.05 ST. MARY'S HURDLE	2m 4.42 (13 declared)
1	4414 Alphonse (10) M. J. Donnelly 5-11-8
2	30 Alphonse (10) M. J. Donnelly 5-11-8
3	1244 Alphonse (10) M. J. Donnelly 5-11-8
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10	1244 Alphonse (10) M. J. Donnelly 5-11-8

Plumpton Jackpot card

CHRIS HAWKINS	TOP FORM
1.40	Shiloh
2.10	Shiloh's Year Man
2.40	Shiloh's Year Man
3.10	Shiloh's Year Man
3.40	Shiloh's Year Man
4.10	Shiloh's Year Man

1.40 SCAYNES HILL MAIDEN HURDLE (DIV 1)	2m 11.22.358 (16 declared)
1	4414 Alphonse (10) M. J. Donnelly 5-11-8
2	30 Alphonse (10) M. J. Donnelly 5-11-8
3	1244 Alphonse (10) M. J. Donnelly 5-11-8
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10	1244 Alphonse (10) M. J. Donnelly 5-11-8

3.30 CAUCASUS AMATEUR RIDERS' HANDICAP (DIV 2)	1m 31.11.22.22 (10 declared)
1	4414 Alphonse (10) M. J. Donnelly 5-11-8
2	30 Alphonse (10) M. J. Donnelly 5-11-8
3	1244 Alphonse (10) M. J. Donnelly 5-11-8
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4.00 APENHISEN SELLING HANDICAP (DIV 1)	1m 31.11.22.22 (10 declared)
1	4414 Alphonse (10) M. J. Donnelly 5-11-8
2	30 Alphonse (10) M. J. Donnelly 5-11-8
3	1244 Alphonse (10) M. J. Donnelly 5-11-8
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10	1244 Alphonse (10) M. J. Donnelly 5-11-8

4.35 APENHISEN SELLING HANDICAP (DIV 2)	1m 31.11.22.22 (10 declared)
1	4414 Alphonse (10) M. J. Donnelly 5-11-8
2	30 Alphonse (10) M. J. Donnelly 5-11-8
3	1244 Alphonse (10) M. J. Donnelly 5-11-8
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2.10 GYNDY NOVICE HURDLE	2m 41.22.763 (13 declared)
1	4414 Alphonse (10) M. J. Donnelly 5-11-8
2	30 Alphonse (10) M. J. Donnelly 5-11-8
3	1244 Alphonse (10) M. J. Donnelly 5-11-8
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2.40 BARCOMBE SELLING HANDICAP HURDLE	2m 11.22.076 (13 declared)
1	4414 Alphonse (10) M. J. Donnelly 5-11-8
2	30 Alphonse (10) M. J. Donnelly 5-11-8
3	1244 Alphonse (10) M. J. Donnelly 5-11-8
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10	1244 Alphonse (10) M. J. Donnelly 5-11-8

3.10 STREATH NOVICE CHASE	3m 11.11.01.03 (13 declared)
1	4414 Alphonse (10) M. J. Donnelly 5-11-8
2	30 Alphonse (10) M. J. Donnelly 5-11-8
3	1244 Alphonse (10) M. J. Donnelly 5-11-8
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10	1244 Alphonse (10) M. J. Donnelly 5-11-8

3.40 SCAYNES HILL MAIDEN HURDLE (DIV 2)	2m 11.22.358 (16 declared)
1	4414 Alphonse (10) M. J. Donnelly 5-11-8
2	30 Alphonse (10) M. J. Donnelly 5-11-8
3	1244 Alphonse (10) M. J. Donnelly 5-11-8
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10	1244 Alphonse (10) M. J. Donnelly 5-11-8

4.15 UCKFIELD HANDICAP CHASE	3m 11.11.01.03 (13 declared)
1	4414 Alphonse (10) M. J. Donnelly 5-11-8
2	30 Alphonse (10) M. J. Donnelly 5-11-8
3	1244 Alphonse (10) M. J. Donnelly 5-11-8
4	1244 Alphonse (10) M. J. Donnelly 5-11-8
5	1244 Alphonse (10) M. J. Donnelly 5-11-8
6	1244 Alphonse (10) M. J. Donnelly 5-11-8
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8	1244 Alphonse (10) M. J. Donnelly 5-11-8
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4.45 CLAYTON MARES' ONLY HANDICAP HURDLE	2m 41.22.763 (13 declared)
1	4414 Alphonse (10) M. J. Donnelly 5-11-8
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3	1244 Alphonse (10) M. J.

Premiership: Chelsea 0 Manchester United 1

United enjoy full dress rehearsal

DAVID LACEY

MANCHESTER United will resume their quest in the Champions League this week comforted by the knowledge that, whatever happens abroad, nobody is about to steal the silver at home. Even if United do not win European club football's most prestigious prize this time, their place in the next tournament is more or less secure.

The season has worked out much as Alex Ferguson would have wished. Having brushed off Chelsea's fading challenge with Saturday's tactically disciplined, if unspectacular, 1-0 victory, United are 11 points clear of Blackburn at the top of the Premiership with 10 games to play.

The lead will be cut to nine if Arsenal win at West Ham tonight while Ferguson's players are settling into their Monte Carlo hotel and focusing on the opening leg of their quarter-final against Monaco on Wednesday. Arsenal, moreover, will have two matches in hand after not starting celebrating their fifth championship in six seasons just yet.

It is, however, surely only a matter of waiting. True, Newcastle blew a 12-point lead two seasons ago but Kevin Keegan was leading a runaway train that clattered to a halt along with the rails, along with the manager.

This is unlikely to happen to Manchester United. There is nothing like winning titles for winning more titles, as Liverpool, the only other club to win five in six seasons, proved in the 1980s and 1990s. One triumph breeds another, and as the team evolves against a background of success the habit is hard to break.

Few who watched at Chelsea could have been left in any doubt that not only are United the best team in the country but they also have an accumulation of title-winning experience that no other can match.

Deprived of Ryan Giggs's pace, Ferguson used Phil Neville in an unfamiliar role in central midfield along with David Beckham. Paul Scholes and Nicky Butt, Chelsea, for all their multinational talent, never overcame this youthful but steadily maturing line of English prodigies.

Versatility is the key. Scholes, playing deeper than usual, won important battles near his own area and was United's outstanding player, with the Norwegian, Ronni Johnsen, not far behind. Phil Neville not only used his pace and stamina to subdue Roberto Di Matteo but also won the game with his first goal in 86 games.

Just past the half-hour Denis Irwin began a slick movement which saw Teddy Sheringham exchange passes with Andy Cole before lobbing the ball over the heads of a Chelsea defence which had stepped up too late to catch Phil Neville offside. The chance was accepted with a regular scorer's aplomb, Neville waiting for the ball to drop and composing himself before driving a shot into the far corner.

The way United kept Chelsea at arm's length for the rest of the game made the game a dress rehearsal for Monaco, where the team that finished at Stamford Bridge may well be the one that starts in the Louis II Stadium. This would mean Henning Berg continuing to partner Johnsen at centre-back after replacing Gary Pallister, who suffered another back injury and is doubtful.

The need for a fit Giggs will become more apparent if United are beaten in Monaco and need to retrieve the situation a fortnight later. Giggs is having his best season but United have adapted so well to the retirement of Eric Cantona and then the loss of Roy Keane with damaged cruciate ligaments that the problem need not be insuperable.

Ferguson himself is surprised at the speed with which the side has developed. "I didn't expect us to come as quickly as this with such a young team," he said. "Sometimes the season has a draining effect, what with injuries and suspensions, but we were almost at full strength today and played with concentration and determination."

The work ethic lay at the heart of United's performance and is something Chelsea need to acquire if they are ever to become serious title contenders. In Gianluca Vialli's first game as player-manager they had beaten Arsenal to reach the League Cup final and shown a fine mixture of industry and adrenalin. But since then they have lost to Leicester and United, both of whom are high on work-rate.

There is nothing wrong with Vialli wanting his team to follow the style of Juventus, using three strikers, himself included. But unless there is consistently good movement off the ball very little will be achieved, and on Saturday the United's defence's task was made easier by the static opposition.

Add to that the fact that only Dennis Wise passed the ball perceptively, creating chances for Dan Petrescu, Mark Hughes and Zola which were wasted through shoddy finishing, and a game billed as the most important yet in the Premiership season turned out to be nothing more than a low-key reminder of how far behind the champions the rest really are.

Monaco is a three-kilometre square lump of opulent concrete and marble, a Chelsea Village to be the same. But there the similarities end. The only time Europe's smallest country works up much of a soundtrack is when a set of Formula One cars are screaming round its normally comatose streets. Saturday's attendance at Stamford Bridge was higher than Monaco's population (30,000). The one certainty is that the carer English papers will be deprived of the old European line about our boys stepping into "a cauldron of hate".

United's manager Alex Ferguson has developed a fondness for horse racing. Thoroughbreds "travel through highs and lows of race-fitness and the skill of the trainer is to bring them to a crescendo on the big day. The imperious manner in which United snuffed out Chelsea's fading title aspirations suggests they are ready to peak again at the right point. Home and hosed they are not, but they sure looked good in the paddock.

In the seats around me they find themselves against an emotional wall and can't wait to start a long afternoon of sulks and recriminations. It was extraordinary to hear loathing turn into envy and then to acceptance of the champions' superiority.

United are not yet home and hosed but they looked good in the paddock



Elbow room... Gary Neville of Manchester United clatters into Chelsea's Gianluca Vialli as they compete for a header

PHOTOGRAPH: TOMMY HINDLEY

Ferguson set fair for classic double

Paul Hayward sees the loathing of Chelsea's sullen fans turn first to envy and then to acceptance of the champions' superiority

AT 11.15am the Chelsea supporter next to me in the Matthew Harding Stand screamed "Vermin!" by way of a welcome for Peter Schmeichel but by noon he was muttering in his friend: "Wish we had a keeper like him." Manchester United tamed Chelsea's crowd as well as their team.

Monaco on Wednesday evening should be a doddle. This is some cultural ride United are on. From Barnsley to London to Monaco in eight days. In the shadow of the new Stamford Bridge hotel — or Bates Motel, as it will become known — United absorbed the venom of an especially hostile crowd and then swallowed up the men in blue. Their next audience will be a collection of royals and tax-exiles rattling their jewellery in the Champions League quarter-final first leg. There will be no one in the Louis II Stadium to taunt David Beckham about his fiancée.

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win both the Premiership and the Champions League. They're good enough."

Saturday was one of those scene-shifting, chapter-changing days. United are not of the FA Cup but strengthened their hold on the title. They cured the defensive deficiencies that undermined them at Old Trafford last Wednesday and coaxed lustre from performances from the likes of Ronny Johnsen and Paul Scholes. Here was a team passing from winter to spring and on towards a possible sparkling climax in the European Cup final at the Amsterdam Arena on May 20.

The proportion of Chelsea supporters who are dedicated to upholding Orwell's dictum that sport is an alternative form of war emptied their songbook of hostile chants but knew pretty soon that resistance was useless. They have their own European mission to worry about, to Seville to face Real Betis on Thursday, but after this it will have the feel of fringe theatre many blocks off the bustling Broadway of the Champions League.

Vialli won a European Cup — as we fogies still insist on calling it — with Juventus and acknowledges that unique strains are placed on a team defending a domestic title while simultaneously pursuing Europe's grand prize. Those strains were evident when intimations of mortality ganged up on United in January, and when they were bundled out of the FA Cup by some fanatical Tynes up at Barnsley.

Yet if Ferguson had been asked by the gods to script the perfect season he would probably have written in a sequence of wobbles after Christmas just to concentrate minds and provide an excuse for regrouping. Had United sailed on in the regal form they showed last autumn he might have been fearing a collapse in front of Prince Albert and his prosperous pals this week.

By the time United had finished with Chelsea the bloke to my right was all out of rage. He had impugned Posh Spice many times, suggested Gary Pallister "get back on [his] Zimmer frame", questioned the sexual proclivities of the referee and dumped all sorts of incomprehensible wrath on Schmeichel.

Towards the end he had his hands on his knees and was looking across balefully to the United supporters singing "we want five" and "champions". He shook his head at them plaintively and mumbled: "Get a life."

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Blackburn Rovers 5
Leicester City 3

Sutton boosts France chance

Mark Redding

NOT many Leicester City players would have taken part in yesterday's countryside march. Rather they would have signed up for the anti-blood sports campaign, the Foxes having been hunted to near-extinction at Ewood Park on Saturday.

Five goals in just over an hour from Blackburn told their own story and though the visitors hit back through Stuart Wilson, Muzzy Izzet and Robert Ullathorne, by then Rovers had lost interest in the chase and were looking to escape the hail and snow.

Chris Sutton's second hat-trick of the season made him the top goalscorer in the Premiership with 16 and reopened the debate about whether he should be picked for England, without quite answering the question of whether he has enough class to be an international striker.

The simplest way to find out would be pitch him into England's friendly against Switzerland on March 26. But the 6ft 3in centre-forward is a Leicester City player, not a Leicester City manager. Huddle after refusing to play in the recent B match against Chile and the England coach has yet to indicate that bridge-building is part of his World Cup agenda.

"I don't have to be a genius to work out that I haven't done my chances any good," the lanky refusenik said, "but I believe in what I did and that's just as important to me. I didn't do it to be arrogant, I did it because I thought it was correct."

"I was on a hiding to nothing," I never said I didn't want to play for England, I just didn't want to play in that game. I've played in B games before and they've never done me any favours."

As a come-and-get-me plea it lacked a certain wit but the inference was clear. Sutton would play for England if asked. Probably, "I'm not here to put any messages across to Glenn Hoddle," he added, just in case he was sounding too enthusiastic.

Sutton is difficult to assess as a player because he has such a casual air, spending much of the time watching the game go by. When he gets the ball he puts himself about like a good old English centre-forward, but whether he has the technique for the international stage is the \$5 million question. What isn't debatable is that the \$5 million striker does possess the knack of finding the back of the net.

Once Martin Dahlin had put Rovers ahead in the 11th minute, Sutton went to work. His opener was a cute back heel, his second an almost casual shot on the stroke of half-time. His third was the best, a curled shot over Kasey Keller which was more Roy of the Rovers than Chris, before Colin Hendry provided a last flourish.

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Leeds United 0 Southampton 1

Jones boys still chipping away

Michael Walker

BOTH of these clubs are experiencing what apologists call transitional seasons, although neither really needed to regroup. On an enthralling evening at Southampton, it seemed noteworthy that snow started falling in the 74th minute.

David Hirst had scored what turned out to be the winning goal two minutes earlier and two minutes after that the white stuff appeared. Carl Palmer saw red for what was, in the referee Keith Burge's eyes, his second illegal challenge.

Burge had foolishly booked the Southampton midfielder for a nothing foul on Gunnar Halle early in the first half and then had no choice but to show him a second yellow for a seriously late tackle that left Ian Harte in agony.

Palmer, harangued by his former club's fans, trudged off without even waiting to see Burge's reaction, but having crossed the touchline he returned to let the referee know his feelings on the incident. Fortunately for him, Hirst intervened physically before he could do further harm to his reputation.

It was not difficult to feel for Palmer because, as the rival managers Dave Jones and George Graham went out of their way to say afterwards, his standing has never been higher.

Gone are the days when he was ridiculed as a donkey; no one can deny his contribution to Southampton's revival and Graham, considering the acrimony surrounding the former

England midfielder's departure from Elland Road last September, was especially conciliatory.

The first booking was not a bookable offence, the Leeds manager said. "The second one was. He didn't deserve to be sent off. He's doing very well at Southampton; he needed a fresh challenge, that's part and parcel of football. I can't be any more sympathetic."

Palmer aside, Graham talked of useful performances from Bruno Ribeiro and the Austrian debutant Martin Hiden, but crucially identified Leeds's major shortcoming as a lack of "subtlety".

Talk of Leeds in Europe seems fanciful compared with the chances of Derby County but it will have to be discussed earnestly this time next year, even in Yorkshire, transitions can take only so long.

Strange as it sounds, Southampton may actually be a better bet for Europe this season than Leeds — a measure of the excellence of Jones's managerial skills. Seven of the Saints' remaining 10 games are against sides below them and Jones said: "Now that we're 11th, I want us to be 10th and then 11th, we've got to keep chipping away at the table."

All it requires is Matt Le Tissier to rediscover some of that old sly magic and it could happen. We got half of him here — but no magic — though luckily Egil Olsenstad rescued the match with a Cryuff drag-back that set up Hirst after Nigel Martyn's second howler of the week.

"Another bad mistake," growled Graham.

Everton 0 Newcastle United 0

Dalglish dishes out detention

Ian Ross

THE fed-up, the bored and the frozen were all ready seeking solace in the bottom of a pint glass when a bleak afternoon finally yielded something worthy of raised eyebrows.

As the snow began to fall on Goodison Park, Kenny Dalglish ushered his entire squad back on to the pitch and had them turn around like chastened schoolboys.

It may have been an act of penance for the timidity shown earlier, or perhaps the Newcastle manager's well-paid employees were simply being asked to continue their search for the goalposts.

Derby County 3 Sheffield Wednesday 0

Wanchope steps in as Burton does everything but score

David Hopps

THE Caribbean might no longer bow to cricket's supremacy, but that is supposed to be because its television screens are swamped with basketball. Only in a World Cup year could the Jamaican Sports Personality of the Year be playing football for Derby County.

Sports personality awards always invite suspicion but it has to be said that Dean Sturridge, who had walked unhurt from a car crash on Friday night, Burton is made of sterner stuff to Sturridge.

Pacy and alert, with Paulo Wanchope and Francesco Balzano he made up a front three which provided constant fascination. It was Wanchope, the bas-

ketball-playing Costa Rican, who scored twice. No player in the Premiership defies logic like Wanchope. His talent is almost impossible to define. He tempts defenders and spectators alike to smile at a childish feint, a hapless dribble or an over-ambitious strike, then once you stop laughing he is five yards clear.

It is not to disparage his talents to recognise that such in-advent humour is part of his attraction. Wanchope finished the first half by bursting beyond a square defence, running straight through Pressman and trying to back-beat the ball inside the far post with his back to goal.

In that first 15 minutes Derby, alert and hungry, might have scored six. Wanchope's crisp finish across Pressman after a slick passing

avoid complete disaster but clearly all is not as it should be in the court of King Kenny.

And the game itself? An enterprise-free zone which had the faithful scurrying away long before a most welcome final whistle.

The fading memory was the treatment meted out to Gary Speed, who last month swapped the captaincy of Everton for the cash of Newcastle. His reward was a highly uncomfortable afternoon of merciless taunting.

Rumour had it that Speed might discover a diplomatic injury shortly before kick-off. In fact he contributed so little that perhaps he should have stayed at home and replied to his hate mail.

Wanchope's second goal displayed the more considered side of his personality, a subtle chip after Pressman had perched Burton's shot. Whether encountering success or misadventure, he runs with knees high as if forever preparing himself for a slam-dunk.

Gary Rowett's efficient finish after 66 minutes, when Wednesday had feebly repelled a corner, emphasised Derby's superiority and left Atkinson to adopt a tactical press-conference scowl, as if to communicate that such performances under his management would never again be countenanced. It is an impressive sight, and at least a month since he last did it.

Wanchope, the bas-

Kinkladze set to see out City's season

Ian Ross

GEORGI KINKLADZE seems destined to finish the season with Manchester City after being snubbed by Everton.

Joe Royle, City's new manager, had hoped to sell the £7 million-rated midfielder and offered Howard Kendall a deal that would have seen Dave Watson and Clats Thomsen move to City along with £5 million. But the Everton manager rejected Kinkladze as overpriced.

Kendall may nevertheless allow Watson to join City on a free transfer, and the centre-back will meet Royle today.

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Monday March 2 1998

West Indies v England: fourth Test, third day

Mike Selvey sees some gutsy batting force Lara's men to bat again in Georgetown

Ramprakash gives England hope

AN INNINGS of character and skill from Mark Ramprakash and Brian Lara's bizarre captaincy combined to give England just the vaguest glimmer of an escape route at Bourda yesterday.

Starting the third day on 87 for six and still needing 66 to avoid the follow-on, Ramprakash produced his best innings for England in a disjointed international career, played immaculately to reach an unbeaten 64 and nursed the tail so well that England were not dismissed until 47 minutes into the afternoon session. They had reached 170, still 183 shy of West Indies' 352.

West Indies lost wickets themselves in a frenetic start to their second innings, including those of the first-innings century-maker Shivnarine Chanderpaul, run out first ball, and Lara, caught at silly point by Mark Butcher.

Scoreboard

WEST INDIES
First innings (overnight 271-5)
S Chanderpaul c Thorpe b Fraser 115
C L Hooper c Hussain b Headley 45
J C Adams bow b Tufnell 28
D Williams c Croft b Headley 26
R Bligh c Sutcliffe b Croft 14
C E L Ambrose c Headley b Tufnell 0
C A Walsh not out 3
O Ramnarine c Russell b Croft 30
Extras (b4, lb14, nb12) 30
Total (281 overs) 352
Fall of wickets: 265, 316, 330, 347, 349, 352
Bowling: Headley 31-2-40-2; Fraser 33-5-77-2; Butcher 3-0-15-2; Croft 36-1-0-2-2; Tufnell 25-10-65-2

ENGLAND

First innings
M A Atherton c Lara b Ambrose 0
M A Butcher bow b Bligh 20
N Hussain bow b Bligh 11
G P Thorpe c O Williams 10
b Ramnarine 10
M R Ramprakash not out 64
R C Russell bow b Ramnarine 20
R O Croft c Lara b Hooper 20
D W Headley c O Williams b Hooper 0
A R C Fraser c Lara b Ramnarine 0
P C R Tufnell c Hussain b Ambrose 26
Extras (b10, lb2, nb14) 26
Total (87.1 overs) 170
Fall of wickets: 1, 37, 41, 65, 75, 138, 139, 140
Bowling: Walsh 27-7-47-2; Ambrose 12-1-6-21-2; Ramnarine 17-8-29-2; Bligh 13-4-36-1; Adams 3-2-0-0; Hooper 15-6-29-2

WEST INDIES

Second innings
S L Campbell c Ramprakash b Fraser 17
D Williams c Stewart b Headley 30
S Chanderpaul run out 30
S C Lara c Butcher b Tufnell 36
C L Hooper bow b Headley 34
J C Adams not out 17
D Williams not out 17
Extras (lb6, nb3) 9
Total (for 5, 37 overs) 118
Fall of wickets: 4, 32, 32, 75, 82
To bats: C E L Ambrose 18; Bligh 20; Ramnarine 18; C A Walsh 18; Unsworth 8; A Bucknor and O B Hair.

off Phil Tufnell for 30. But at 119 for five they had a lead of 301 and, barring civil unrest or torrential rain, ought to have little trouble securing a 2-1 lead in the series.

Lara could make the claim and indeed did — that it was a matter of indifference to him whether England followed on or not, and in the context of a West Indies win he might well be right. But the fact that he refused to use Curtly Ambrose, presumably saving him for a pop at England in the second innings, indicated how much he wanted to bowl them out and get at England again.

Ambrose was called up to issue the *coup de grace* only when things were becoming embarrassing, and only then when Lara was off the field and Carl Hooper temporarily took over the reins.

Quite simply Lara was too clever for his own good, and it came back to haunt him at the start of West Indies' second innings when Stuart Williams was out to a smart catch by Alec Stewart at second slip as he drove airily at Dean Headley and then, five overs later, Sherwin Campbell and Chanderpaul were out to successive balls.

History will probably not endow Williams and Campbell with the same reverence it reserved for Gordon Greenidge and Desmond Haynes, and neither has enjoyed a happy series.

Campbell looked to be on his way out of the slump yesterday, however, cracking Headley to the square-leg boundary and then covering driving him for another four, holding the pose just long enough to make sure it was there for photographic posterity. But when he had made 17 he fended Fraser off his hips and Ramprakash at short leg held a sharp catch.

Chanderpaul was given a hero's welcome by the Guyanese crowd, but their pleasure was shortlived as he pushed his first ball into the covers and called Lara for a quick single.

Nasser Hussain was on the ball in a trice and the judgement of the third umpire was that, as his throw hit the stumps, Chanderpaul's bat was on the line and therefore he was out. It was the closest margin, but sufficient, and a case of technology giving a fair judgment



Man of steel... Mark Ramprakash drives the ball through mid-off during his innings of 64 not out that ensured England did not have to follow on

PHOTOGRAPH: LAURENCE GRIFFITHS

Upright West Indies are leaky, creaky and down in the dumps

B C Pires finds little Caribbean cheer at Bourda as Lara's slackers let things slip

AT the start of the third day of the Nth Test at Bourda, West Indies fans were loudly debating the advantages of Brian Lara enforcing the follow-on. With a target of 183, England needed 66 runs from their last four batsmen — one more run than their first four had given them — and the decision whether to bat again yesterday looked to be Lara's alone to make.

Long before lunch,

though, West Indies supporters were searching for something to cheer about as the chance of the follow-on slipped — or rather was possible — away. As Mark Ramprakash completed the most important half-century of this tour, West Indies supporters fell to remembering fondly that he had a Guyanese father. It was a desperate attempt at a silver lining that only served to prove the cloud.

From 75 for six, West

Indies fielders casually, often apparently even carelessly, and on occasions outright negligently, allowed the score to drift to 139 for seven. They then gave up 30 runs for the last wicket. In contrast, England made 95 runs from those last four wickets — and two of those batsmen went for ducks.

West Indies in their first innings had lost their last seven wickets for 57 after the first two had managed only 36. Had Shivnarine Chanderpaul not been dropped when he was on nine, the West Indies total would have been at least

111 runs fewer. The most important new coaching tool for the West Indies team would have to be a calculator.

The Welshman Robert Croft, batting with a daffodil in his pad on St David's Day, contributed a vital 26 in the critically important eighth-wicket partnership with Mark Ramprakash which brought 64 runs, but the follow-on was more likely avoided because West Indies seemed to be fielding with leaks in their trousers. They certainly had leaks in their defences.

So-called reputable fielders escorted balls to the

boundary without trying to impede or even affect their progress. Captain Lara himself chased a catch off a Walsh no-ball all the way to fine leg, only to drop Phil Tufnell anyway. Tufnell, whose value as a batsman is usually limited to entertaining the crowd, faced 31 deliveries before he was removed.

You could count on one hand the number of times a West Indian threw himself to the ground to save a boundary. The prevailing ethic seemed to be that black men don't dive. Their lackadaisical approach continued into the

beginning of their second innings. Given opening batsmen like Stuart Williams and Sherwin Campbell, the prudent West Indian fan now assumes a starting scoreline of 0 for 2. Stuart Williams as a batsman could safely be given out while still in the pavilion. Save time. Perhaps it may be necessary to bring in the third umpire to get a television close-up just to make sure it was Stuart Williams and then declare him out the moment he put on his pads.

Campbell was very unlucky to be given out caught off his thigh-pad

and a red-faced Welsh dragon on St David's Day, who tucked a daffodil in his right pad and played with passion for a further 1½ hours as Lara went through all but his most potent of changes.

On 11, Croft was yards down the pitch in Hooper's

second over and should have been stumped by David Williams, but he fumbled the chance. A dog immediately wandered on to the outfield, and left an apt comment on the quality of wicketkeeping in this match.

Croft was eventually out for 28, caught by Lara at slip as he tried to cut Hooper, but he and Ramprakash, undisturbed by Ambrose, had added 64 for the seventh wicket.

The ending of the stand sparked a mini-collapse that saw Headley edge Hooper to the wicketkeeper in the same over and then, with one more added and 13 still needed to avoid the follow-on, Fraser sweeping Dinesh Ramnarine and top-edging a simple catch for Lara.

With Tufnell, no Wally Hammond, coming to the crease, West Indies would have been looking to complete the job. Instead Tufnell defended stoutly as Ramprakash eked out the runs, reaching his half-century in three hours with just a single required, and running Hooper to third man in the next over to ensure West Indies batted again.

Battling Mayock and Edwards strike gold for Britain

Duncan Mackay sees victories for a gritty runner and a back-to-form world record holder on the final day of the European Indoor Athletics Championships in Valencia

JOHN MAYOCK won the 3,000 metres and Jonathan Edwards, in the triple jump, earned Britain a second gold medal at the Velodromo Luis Puig here last night.

Barnsley-born Mayock showed Yorkshire grit to overcome strong-arm tactics bordering on the illegal and defy the Spanish trio of Manuel Pancorbo, Alberto Garcia and Isaac Viqueira.

He refused to concede the inside lane at the start of the last of the 15 laps and was

pushed by an angry Garcia. This only acted as a catalyst for the 27-year-old Briton, who opened a three-yard lead he never surrendered as he took the tape in 7min 55.09sec.

This was without doubt the most unpopular victory of the weekend. The race had been deliberately scheduled as the last track event because it was the Spaniards' best chance of a gold medal, and Mayock was accused of blocking the Spaniards with his elbows.

"We wouldn't have minded

losing in a clean race," said Pancorbo. "He's a good enough British runner to have won without that."

Pancorbo refused to shake his hand at the medal ceremony and Mayock's lap of honour was booed by the crowd.

Mayock responded by pointing to his British vest. "I know how the bull feels now," he said later.

Earlier this year his coach, the former Commonwealth 1500m champion Peter Elliott, accused him of being more interested in chasing money than medals. That looked a clever piece of psychology as Elliott, attending a major championships for the first time as a team coach, roared his protest to victory.

Unlike Ashia Hansen there was no world record for Ed-

wards, but the fourth element that has been missing from his performances for the last two years was back: it was hop, step, jump and smile as he took the gold medal with a leap of 17.43 metres.

Edwards has often looked a haunted figure since his astonishing performance of three years ago when he raised the triple-jump world record of 18.29m in winning the world championships in Gothenburg.

"Jumping indoors was about getting rid of the frustration of the last two years," Edwards said. "The importance of Gothenburg was greater than I appreciated at the time. I feel more free and more relaxed now."

"I don't warm-up wishing I was somewhere else."

He was the hottest favourite

of these championships, having jumped 30 centimetres further than his closest rival, but warned his supporters that it would need more than just turning up to take the gold medal. In effect he was wrong, sealing victory with his very first jump and finishing 28 centimetres ahead of his nearest rival, Germany's Charles Friedek.

The golds were tinged with disappointment for Julian Golding and Tony Jarrett in the 200m and 50m hurdles respectively. Golding finished fourth as the Ukraine's Sergey Gerasimov raced to victory in 20.40sec ahead of Anninos Marcoulides of Cyprus and Golding's team-mate Allyn Condon, whose bronze was the first of his senior career.

Jarrett failed to reach even the final of the hurdles and at

29 he seems destined never to put a golden seal on a career lived in the long shadow of Colin Jackson.

Britain finished the three-day event with six medals, the most unexpected being Diane Allahgreen's bronze in the 800 hurdles. The 23-year-old Liverpool runner improved her personal best by 0.21 to clock 8.02 in the final and finish third. France's Patricia Girard won in 7.85.

England's Darren Campbell, coached by Linford Christie, finished third behind the world 100 metres champion Maurice Greene in the Botany Bay Athletics Gift professional race in Sydney. Jon Drummond, another American, was second. Birchfield's Katharine Merry was second in the women's 100 yards race.



Winner... John Mayock

PHOTOGRAPH: PHIL COLE